SPECIAL ISSUE: SPORTBIKE EXOTICA

CYCLE GUIDE

RZ500

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SEPTEMBER 1984
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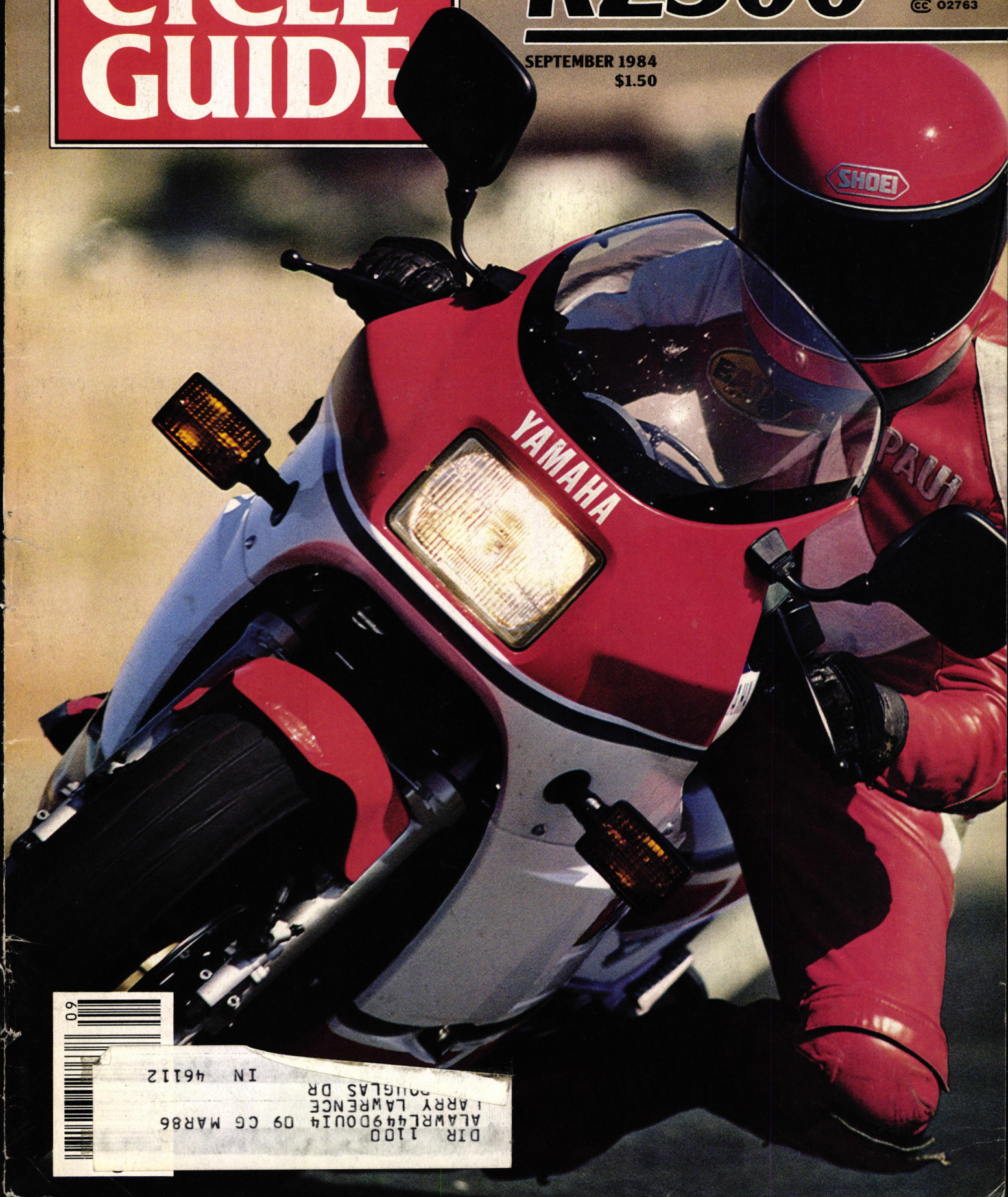

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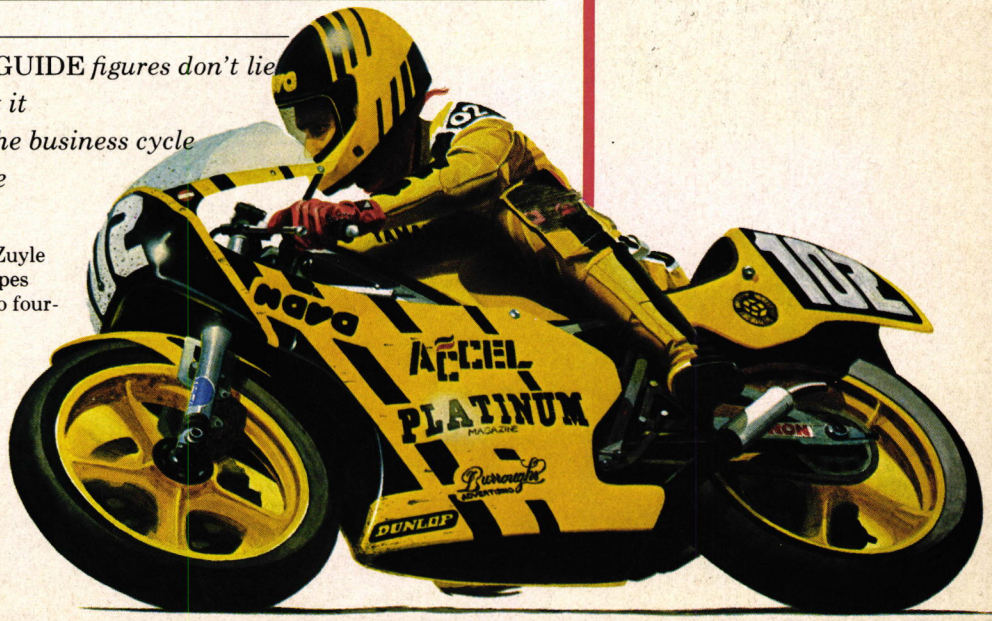
ON THE COVER:
David Dewhurst's Nikon catches Paul Van Zuyle in mid-fantasy, as the RZ500 leans and scrapes its way from Eurobike wonderland right into four-color reality.

QUOTE:
"The pump gas we have is so bad, it pings when you wash parts with it."

—Pg. 75



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CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact.

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WRX 250-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.1/11.6	232	30.0/4.65	6
Cagiva WMX 250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.24	5
Honda ATC200X-'83	August '83	ATV	Four-stroke	7.2/6.2	285	N/A	5
Honda ATC250R-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.0	311	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR500R-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	12.0/12.5	228	27.2/4.25	5
Honda XR200R-'84	August '84	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.9/9.6	235	26.0/4.13	6
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 400WR-'84	July '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.2	242	28.5/5.16	6
Husqvarna 500CR-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.8	240	30.0/5.51	4
Husqvarna 500XC-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	11.7/12.8	245	30.0/5.98	6
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KDX200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.9	214	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	195	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
Kawasaki KLR600-'84	September '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.2/9.3	322	29.5/4.80	5
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.21	4
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki RM125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.4	190	29.5/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Suzuki RM500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.8	234	29.7/4.84	4
Yamaha IT200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.6	211	28.0/4.53	6
Yamaha TT600K-'83	August '83	Trail	Four-stroke	11.7/10.8	280	28.0/4.65	5
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.6	214	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RS-'84	March '84	2C/G	979.9	13.172/100.11	125	495	27–50	148
H-D FXRS Low Glide-'84	January '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.917/94.57	112	575	38–48	140
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.928/93.65	112	639	34–61	140
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.603/88.75	107	774	39–54	152
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.842/93.94	106	515	43–55	138
H-D XLX-61-'83	June '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.459/95.94	106	488	40–72	128
Honda CX650 Custom-'83	May '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.560/102.97	119	454	38–48	124
Honda CX650 Turbo-'83	March '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.093/111.66	137†	538	25–44	124
Honda GL1200A Aspencade-'84	March '84	4C/G	1181.9	13.156/98.14	118	744	33–46	141
Honda Nighthawk 650-'83	December '82	4A/G	656.0	12.287/108.04	122	451	29–51	127
Honda Nighthawk S-'84	February '84	4A/G	696.7	12.048/109.75	125	492	28–45	125
Honda VF400F-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/F	399.1	13.588/96.35	112	402	34–51	127
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	July '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.484/106.00	126	419	33–48	123
Honda VF750F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.890/114.64	140	511	23–39	127
Honda VF1000F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.121/123.45	150	536	23–45	125
Honda V45 Sabre-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.179/111.11	128	514	33–46	130
Honda VT500 Ascot-'83	October '83	52 deg. 2D/G	490.9	13.628/93.75	112	411	41–61	129
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.906/100.78	127	484	48–55	132
Kawasaki GPz550-'84	July '84	4A/F	553.8	12.559/105.38	123	436	32–59	136
Kawasaki GPz750-'84	May '84	4A/F	739.0	12.114/110.97	135	502	37–47	120
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.225/123.53	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100-'84	May '84	4A/F	1089.9	11.312/120.80	145	560	24–48	120
Kawasaki KZ550 Spectre-'83	May '83	4A/G	553.8	13.348/96.77	116†	441	44–56	137
Kawasaki KZ700-'84	August '84	4A/F	694.9	12.433/107.01	127	483	39–53	132
Kawasaki Ninja-'84	May '84	4A/F	908.2	11.181/123.62	146	523	24–44	126
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	March '84	6A/G	1286.1	13.346/97.61	116	882	28–44	142
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '83	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS450E-'83	January '83	2A/F	448.2	14.236/93.16	106†	384	39–49	131
Suzuki GS550ES-'84	July '84	4A/F	572.3	12.675/103.68	123	444	30–51	135
Suzuki GS650M Katana-'83	November '83	4A/G	673.9	13.238/101.01	122†	491	49–60	137
Suzuki GS750E-'83	August '83	4A/F	747.4	11.893/112.92	131†	485	35–50	135
Suzuki XN85 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/F	673.9	12.381/107.14	132†	521	34–46	120
Yamaha RZ350-'84	July '84	2A/F††	347.4	13.529/97.61	111	357	26–53	122
Yamaha RZ500-'84	September '84	4D/F††	499.7	12.053/112.64	136	439	25–37	N/A
Yamaha FJ600-'84	July '84	4A/F	598.8	12.468/105.63	126	435	32–50	129
Yamaha FJ1100-'84	June '84	4A/F	1097.6	10.992/124.48	146	535	27–46	121
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	April '83	75 deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.835/101.46	108	503	38–45	138
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137

***A**-Transverse Vertical, **B**-Vertical (single-cylinder only), **C**-Horizontally Opposed, **D**-Tandem Vee, **E**-Transverse Vee, **F**-Chain Final Drive, **G**-Shaft Final Drive, **H**-Belt Final Drive

† indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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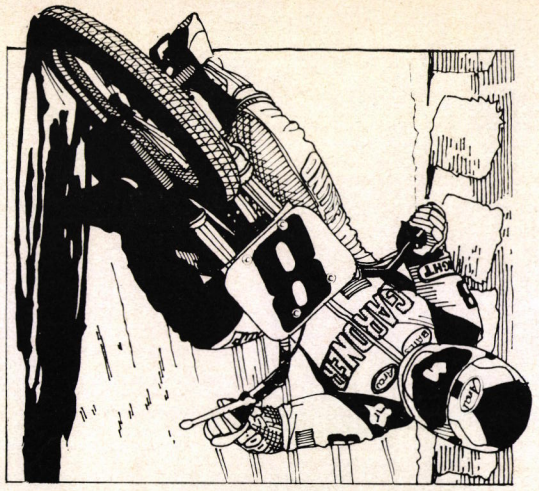

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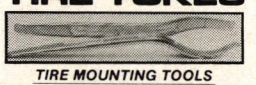

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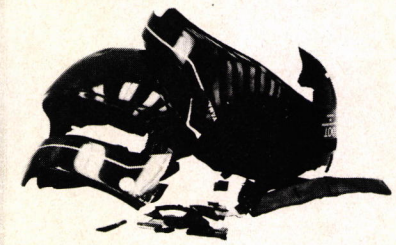
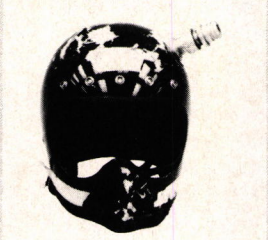
megalite™ is the answer. There is nothing like it in the helmet industry today! Leaving ANSI, DOT and Snell Standards behind, we used our air cannon in the search for an answer.

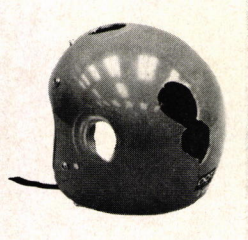
It is an awesome moment when a shell is impacted by a missile thrown at 145 mph. Such tests are included on all Maxon Helmets. Most shells on the market today are blown away by two or three such hits. Others scarcely slow the missile down. Maxon Mega II made of **megalite**™ holds together hit after hit. The toughness of a **megalite**™ shell is matched by an incredible shock absorbing ability.



European Polyamide.



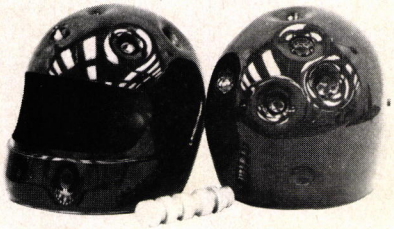
Fibre Reinforced — Some folks want their helmet ventilated.



European ABS — Frail at any angle.

Fibre Reinforced — Too serious to comment.

The Mega II assembly is completed by the addition of extra thick energy absorption liners of polystyrene. They wrap around the head and across the chin bar. Accident investigation shows that deadly head injury does occur from impact to the point of the chin. There should be as much shock absorption material in the chin bar as possible.



megalite™ *Maxon Mega II with missile from air cannon.*

Polycarbonate — "Vanguard" Old Faithful.

Shell structural integrity is not infinite in any material. Some materials reach their structural limits very soon. When the structure fails there will be a flow of energy, or impact concentrated at the point of failure. In reverse, if the structure holds together, the energy is spread over a larger area. It is wishful thinking to believe that a failed shell absorbs more energy than one still intact. If that were so, we would throw away our snow shoes and wear high heeled boots to walk in deep snow.

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Editorial

You Can't Always Get What You Want

But if you try sometimes. . .you can.

• If you're the kind of sporting rider who draws comfort from the thought that the world's best high-performance sportbikes are just as close as your nearest motorcycle dealership, stop right here. There'll be small comfort for you in what follows.

Granted, what you *can* find in U.S. dealerships borders on the amazing, worlds better than what anyone could have predicted a few years ago. But if you imagine your selection includes the best available hardware, the absolute top drawer in high performance, get ready for a rude awakening. Just a look at any of the sportbike Riding Impressions in this issue—or, for a straight dose of what you're missing, "The Untouchables," on page 35—should make a shattering argument to the contrary.

But why should that be the case? Why is it that the single largest motorcycle market in the world doesn't get first crack at all the good stuff? Why is it that U.S. riders get a bowdlerized version of sportbiking, a watered-down shot of streetbike performance?

Naturally, it's a complex question, one posed most loudly as the new models are prepared to debut each year. And, just as naturally, the question has been rendered infinitely more complicated by an alphabet soup of government that includes DOT, EPA and, most recently, ITC. But as convenient as it's always been to round up the usual scapegoats, to start pointing fingers and shouting Big Government, those agencies of the people merely magnified the condition, they didn't create it.

In fact, the root cause of your not being able to make a choice of any motorcycle built anywhere isn't even the jigsaw puzzle of overlapping market segments, fiscal realities, geographical concerns and legal considerations that goes into the ever-changing market strategy of each manufacturer. Beyond all that, at the core of the problem, is a lack of hard information about What Riders Really Want. That's the big question, one that has never been successfully addressed for the U.S. market. The bottom line is that motorcycle marketing strategies that apply to other markets just don't seem to work here.

The product researchers, the people who decide what will and what won't eventually come out of the crates in U.S. dealerships, have to contend with one confusing but undeniable fact: The American motorcycle market is *different*. How else can you explain the Nighthawk S, a sportbike mechanically similar to the CBX750 distributed in Europe, save that the American version has a shaft final drive? A shaft-driven, pure-performance sportbike probably couldn't even *exist* in any other country. Here, it thrives. *Vive la difference.* That difference also serves to explain the absence of a high-performance 250 class in the U.S., when that class is an established mainstay in most other motorcycle markets. And it goes some of the way to explaining the U.S. preoccupation for big-bore, high-performance bikes in a country held down to 55 mph.

Those responsible for deciding which motorcycles make the cut and which ones don't aren't certain as to the precise boundaries of that difference, but they know it exists. It crops up even when the U.S.-designated models differ only slightly from those intended for other markets—and the differences can be telling. Take, for example, Yamaha's FJ1100, which for other countries is geared for a higher top speed than it is for the U.S. The difference is in the U.S. fascination with quarter-mile performance over top speed. It would seem that when *we* talk high performance, we're talking apples and oranges with the rest of the world.

Fair enough. But some people aren't content with the version of high performance that's been assigned to the U.S. A growing body of riders is looking beyond what's available at the corner dealership to satisfy their sportbike needs—or wants. We're among them. Over the past few years, we've repeatedly gone past what can be easily acquired in the search for the cutting edge. Certainly, some of that desire to sample the forbidden fruit is a case of the grass being greener elsewhere. But not all of it. Often enough, we've found that the grass *is* greener, the sportbikes being shipped elsewhere *are* in some measureable way better than what can be obtained here through conventional channels.

Of course, where there's a want there's a way. These days, a number of firms have recognized a hole in the U.S. motorcycle market, and they're scrambling to bring in high-performance can't-haves for riders who won't be limited to someone else's version of performance. Buying into the realization of your moto-fantasies can be a risky proposition, though. We know; we've imported non-U.S. bikes, dealt with people who've brought in bikes—and dealt with nearly as many who have paid to have machinery brought in, only to have to pay again to have it shipped back to its point of origin after failing to clear U.S. Customs. It's hardly cut and dried.

A lot of good that does you. If you've got the wants for unobtanium, and don't want to run the gauntlet of a dizzying array of bureaucracies, you're stuck, right? Not necessarily. At least not if your primary goal is getting the motorcycle, not just the exclusivity that goes with exotic sportbike hardware. And, of course, not if you're willing to use the system to get what you want.

You see, those product researchers who decide what eventually will be in the showrooms aren't only looking for answers to The Big Question; they're just as interested in the answers to the little ones along the way as well—like what non-U.S.-designated models stand a good chance of generating rider interest here. And they'll use any conduit to gather that information. One of the best is "Wishbook" in this magazine, a frequently run column in which riders sound off about machinery that isn't being built—or isn't being sold here. Sort of a write-in ballot from the people who'll be voting with their wallets—or abstaining—come new-model time. If you can't find the bikes you want in U.S. showrooms, use it. In fact, use all the magazines. Consider them your personal public-address systems. You can bet the manufacturers are paying attention. And after all, you've got nothing to lose but your second-class status—and *everything* to gain.

—Larry Works

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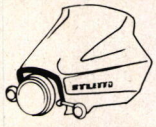

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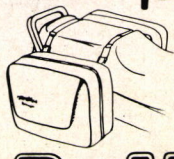

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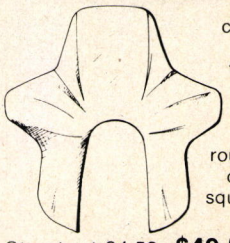

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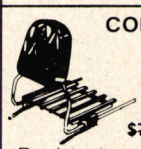

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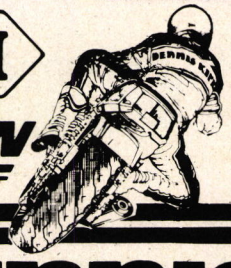

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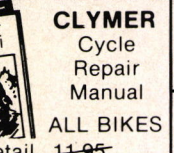

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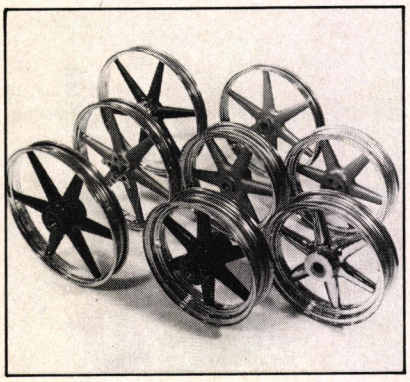
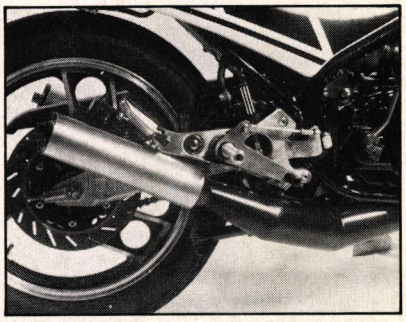
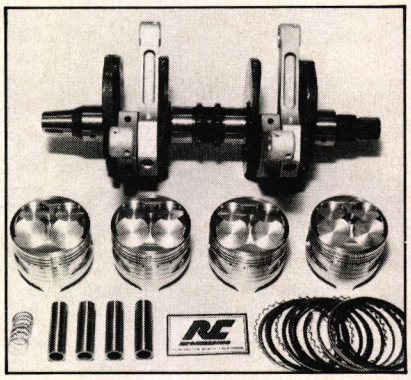


Strike Back: Avenger wheels feature chrome-plated outer rims and a choice of flat-black, gold, shot-peened or custom-painted spokes and centers. These wheels are made in 15- and 16-inch rear and 19- and 21-inch front sizes, and the Avenger hardware is claimed to fit all stock Harley-Davidsons. The wheels are made of two separate pieces, and the manufacturer claims that dented rims can be repaired by replacing the outer rim at the factory. For more information, contact Avenger Wheels, Dept. CG, 12111 Branford Street. Unit F-1, Sun Valley, California 91352.

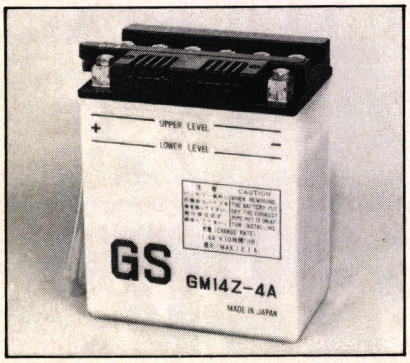
Down The Tubes: Stock RZ350 pipes meet the letter of the law, but they won't help you when it comes time to rule the road. For then, it might come down to Allspeed expansion chambers, pipes for the real injector-oil-blooded RZ enthusiast. These pipes are built in England, and are claimed to meet strict European sound restrictions, but still increase performance and raise the power peak to 10,500 rpm. They're available in Race Replica finish for $199.95, chrome at $179.95 or black ceramic for $169.95. For more information on these pipes and other RZ hop-up parts, contact RSC Performance at Dept. CG, P.O. Box 14664, Atlanta, Georgia 30324.





The Fast Get Faster: Disappointed with the leisurely acceleration of your V65 Magna or Sabre? If nothing but Warp Eight will slake your thirst for speed, you might want to check out some new performance parts from R.C. Engineering. Shown here is the R.C. welded stroker crankshaft with R.C. Golden rods and oversize pistons. The stroker kit takes the V65 to 1230cc, and is claimed to require no machine work for installation. To learn more, contact R.C. Engineering, Dept. CG, 5781 Machine Drive, Huntington Beach, California 92649.

Juice Up: Not getting a charge out of your Interceptor anymore? It could be just your battery. And the solution could come from GS Batteries, which now makes a Polymion series replacement model for the Honda V45 Interceptor and Magna. The GS Polymion series batteries feature anti-seep terminals that help prevent corrosion and seepage. Although GS is not a household name—at least in connection with batteries—the company claims to be Japan's oldest, largest supplier of consumer batteries. GS batteries are available through motorcycle dealers.



Darth Vader Is Back: Due to popular demand, the Simpson Model 30 helmet is now back in production. The distinctive helmet with "Miss Piggy" snout and notched eye port is available with a fiberglass shell or with a lightweight carbon fiber shell. Helmets made from either material can be had in Indy Red, Jet Black or Competition Silver. For more information, contact Simpson, Dept. CG, 22630 South Normandie Avenue, Torrance, California 90502.

See The Light: Brighten up your nightlife with KC Hilites' motorcycle auxiliary lighting system. KCs are available in driving or fog beams, finished in either chrome or black chrome, and are claimed to withstand wet weather and high vibration levels. The motorcycle lighting kit includes brackets, wiring and a handlebar switch with an LED display that glows when the lights are on. The motorcycle lighting kit costs $133, and KC Hilites offers a five-year limited warranty on all parts. To find out more, contact KC Hilites, Dept. CG, Williams, Arizona 86046.

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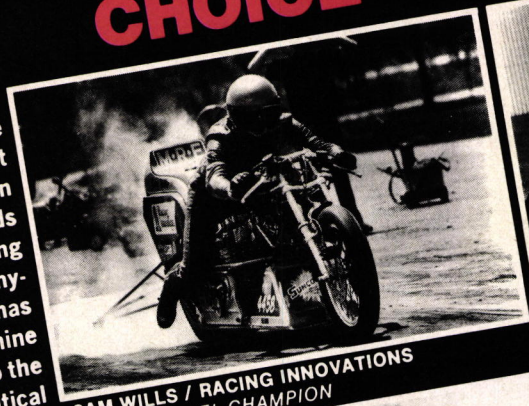

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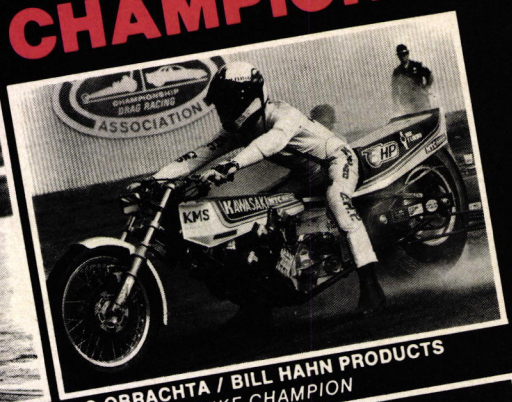

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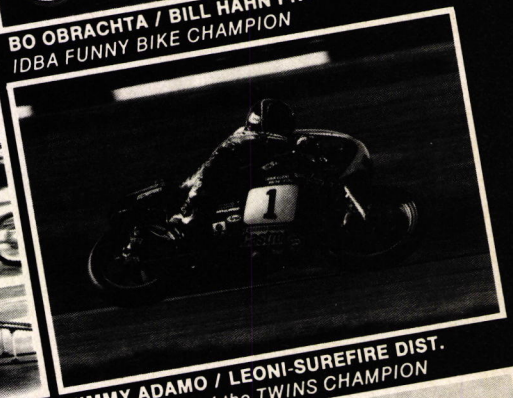

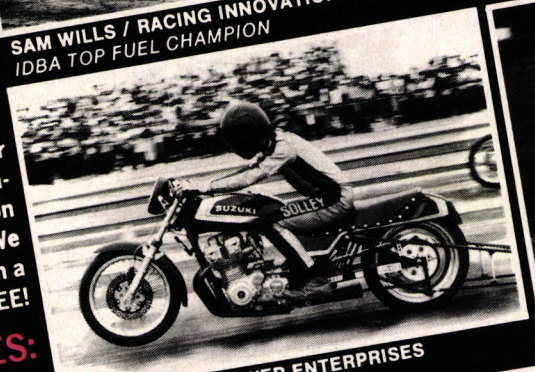

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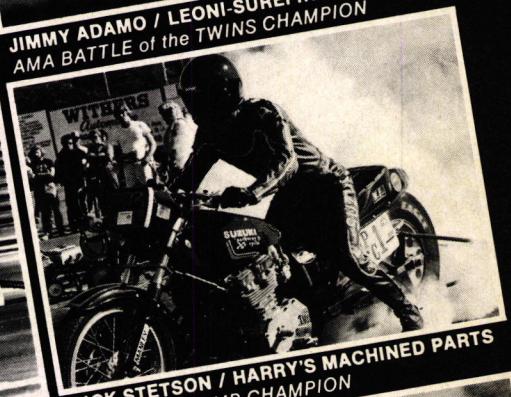
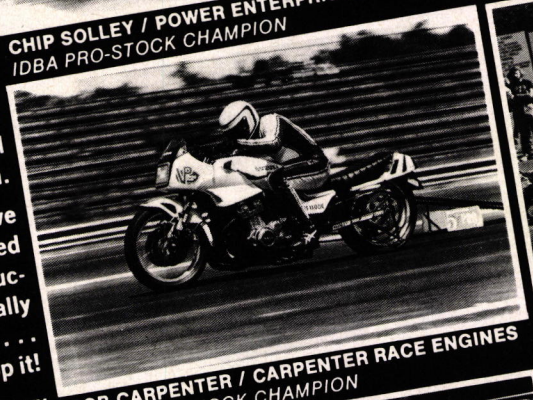
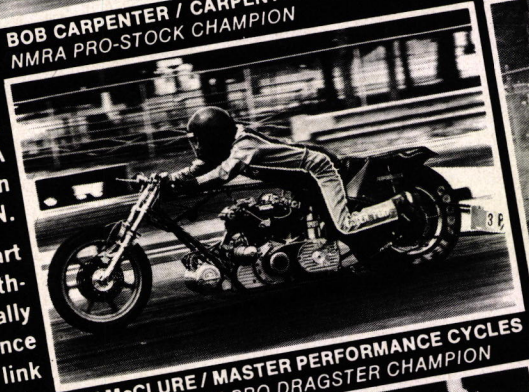
JIMMY ADAMO / LEONI-SUREFIRE DIST.
AMA BATTLE of the TWINS CHAMPION





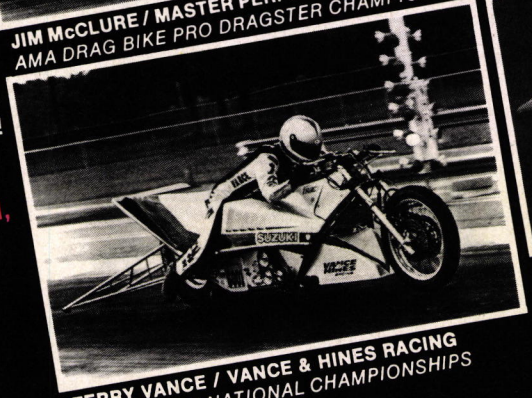
BOB CARPENTER / CARPENTER RACE ENGINES
NMRA PRO-STOCK CHAMPION

RICK STETSON / HARRY'S MACHINED PARTS
NMRA PRO-COMP CHAMPION



JIM McCLURE / MASTER PERFORMANCE CYCLES
AMA DRAG BIKE PRO DRAGSTER CHAMPION

FRANK GIORDANO / GPR PERFORMANCE
NMRA SUPER MODIFIED CHAMPION



TERRY VANCE / VANCE & HINES RACING
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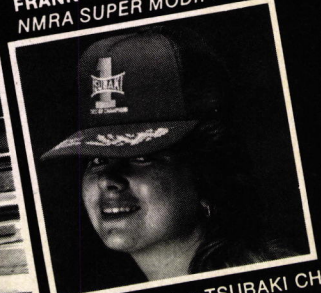

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FOR THE 2ND TIME IN 1984, CYCLE GUIDE IS GIVING AWAY TWO GRAND PRIZES—WIN THE FULL-DRESS TOURING BIKE OF YOUR CHOICE

2 GRAND PRIZES

THE FULL-DRESS TOURING BIKE OF YOUR CHOICE:

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4 FIRST PRIZES

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- **SUZUKI GS1150ES** The finest hyperbike on earth for the past four years now has the biggest engine in the class, along with a new single-shock chassis and space-age styling.
- **YAMAHA FJ1100** Not only is it 1984's King of the Quarter-Mile, it's also a backroad missile that looks, feels and behaves just like a Grand Prix roadracer—which is no surprise, since it's built like one.

10 SECOND PRIZES

CHOICE OF:

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- **SUZUKI GS550ES** Steady and smooth like a proper street machine but fast and agile like a genuine racebike.
- **YAMAHA RD350LC** They call it the Kenny Roberts Special—and for good reason: It's a street-legal roadracer that even King Kenny could enjoy.

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- **HONDA CR250R** Able to make a winner out of almost anyone.
- **KAWASAKI KX250** A product of Team Green's Supercross succes
- **YAMAHA YZ250** The kind of horsepower you'd expect only from an Open-class machine.
- **SUZUKI RM250** Barnett rode it last year; now it's your turn.

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- **KAWASAKI KDX200** If you can't do it on this bike, you can't do it at all.
- **HONDA XR200R** No longer just a playbike, but a serious enduro race
- **YAMAHA IT200** Bigger, faster and ready to do battle with anything in its class.

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50% OFF THE REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION PRICE AND A WHOPPING **61%** OFF THE COVER PRICE —ONLY **58¢** AN ISSUE

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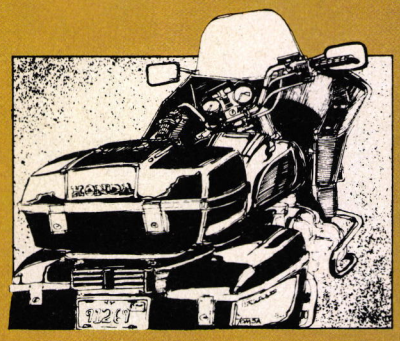
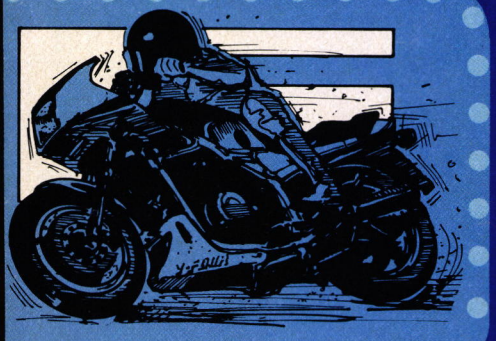




You are invited to enter this ALL NEW SUPER $60,000 SWEEPSTAKES #2. You may be one of TWO LUCKY GRAND PRIZE WINNERS to drive away on the DELUXE TOURING BIKE of your choice—just like Mr. Steven Dixon, of Layton, UT., who was one of the lucky GRAND PRIZE WINNERS in 1983.

Or maybe you'll win one of 489 other great prizes—including Hyperbikes, Motocrossers, Enduros, and Street Middleweights, even All-Terrain Vehicles. With a total of 16 bikes to be given away, you have 16 chances to WIN that special motorcycle you've always wanted. **SEND YOUR ENTRY TODAY!**

And if you like, you may subscribe to CYCLE GUIDE for only 58¢ an issue. You don't have to buy a thing to enter, but you should know about CYCLE GUIDE'S LOWEST POSSIBLE RATE—

12 ISSUES FOR $6.99—HALF PRICE! YOU SAVE $6.99 OFF THE REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, $11.01 OFF THE COVER PRICE!

Whether you order or not is up to you, but either way send in your **SUPER $60,000 SWEEPSTAKES #2 ENTRY TODAY!** This is a brand new contest—even if you entered last winter, you'll still want to send in your entry right away. It could make you the proud owner of one of these fabulous prizes:

ENTER TODAY—

All Prizes Will Be Awarded— No Purchase Necessary—

No Entry Fee!

OFFICIAL SWEEPSTAKES RULES

1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY! Use the enclosed card to enter, or print your name, address and zip code on a 3"x5" piece of paper. Mail each entry separately to CYCLE GUIDE, **1984 SUPER $60,000.00 SWEEPSTAKES #2**, P.O. Box 944, Farmingdale, NY 11737.

2. All prizes will be awarded in a drawing to be held under the supervision of an independent Certified Public Accountant before January 11, 1985. Decisions of the Judges are final. Winners will be notified by mail within 30 days of Drawing.

3. All entries must be postmarked by November 30, 1984 and received by December 14, 1984 to be eligible for Drawing.

4. You may win one of a total of 491 prizes — 2 Grand Prizes, 4 First Prizes, 10 Second Prizes, 25 Third Prizes, 50 Fourth Prizes, 100 Fifth Prizes, 300 Sixth Prizes. All are guaranteed to be awarded.

5. Only 1 Major Prize per household. Prizes based upon availability at participating dealer. Substitution upon mutual agreement of prize winner and participating dealer for motorcycle of equal value. Sales tax is the sole responsibility of prize winner.

6. **CYCLE GUIDE'S ALL NEW 1984 SUPER $60,000 SWEEPSTAKES** State and Local laws apply; void where prohibited. Employees of Cycle Guide Publications, their families and their respective agencies and affiliates are not eligible.

7. A partial list of prize winners will be available after March 1, 1985.

...and, BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND FOR CYCLE GUIDE'S SUPER $60,000 SWEEPSTAKES, YOU MAY CHOOSE A VERSATILE AND FUN, YET PRACTICAL

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE

- **HONDA ATC200X**
  Competition-level handling combined with four-stroke ridability.
- **KAWASAKI KXT250 TECATE**
  The machine most likely to get to the checkered flag first.
- **SUZUKI LT185E QUADRUNNER**
  The fourth wheel adds a whole new dimension in stability and versatility.
- **YAMAHA TRI-MOTO 200EL**
  An all-time high in ease of operation thanks to electric starting and shaft drive.

25 THIRD PRIZES

BELL LTD HELMETS For the ultimate in safety and comfort. The top of the line street helmet from the world's most famous helmet maker.

50 FOURTH PRIZES

CHASE HARPER COMPAC 1150 TANK BAG A whopping 1,150 cubic inches of useful space, with a separate foam protected compartment, detachable map case, convenient coin pouch, and quick-release mounting; made of durable, water-resistant 11 oz. nylon.

100 FIFTH PRIZES

MOTO-X-FOX STREETPAWS GLOVES
The finest lightweight riding gloves made. Soft glove leather combined with nylon stretch finger sidepanels, draft-free extra-long cuffs, and Velcro wrist straps for a secure fit.

300 SIXTH PRIZES

ECLIPSE NIGHT RIDER A bright, flashing warning light to ward off the traffic. Powered by wafer-thin batteries, it's less than 4" x 3-1/2" x 1." Visible for hundreds of feet in any conditions.

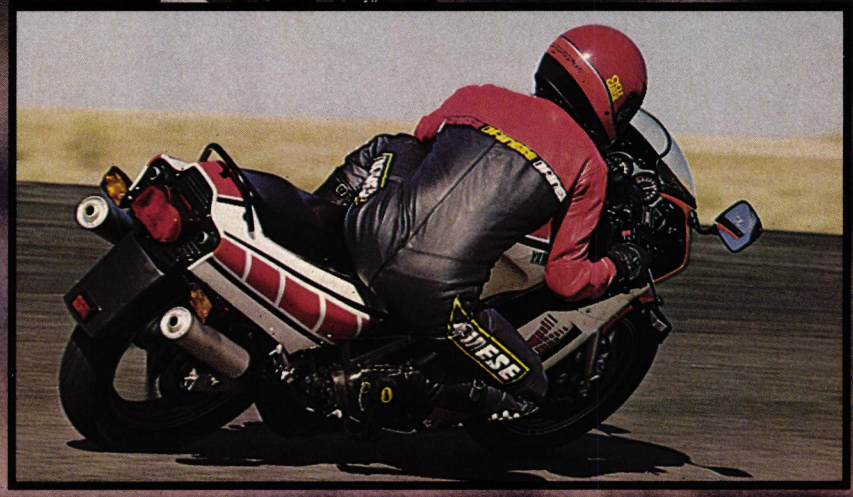
SHOEI
YAMAHA

RIDING IMPRESSION:

Yamaha RZ500

The quickest way to transform the turn-off for your favorite road into a GP starting line.

BY CHARLES EVERITT



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

There is a sure and certain way to sportbiking success, one path guaranteed to win the hearts of sporting enthusiasts the world over: Build—as faithfully as possible—a street-going replica of a 500cc Grand Prix roadracer; one that can recreate the soul-stirring kinesthetics, the sound, feel and fury, of a GP bike in full flight; one that can make its pilot feel like a world championship contender. And, to make the bike virtually irresistable, create it in the image of a motorcycle whose rider is synonymous with GP racing: Kenny Roberts.

Such a description perfectly fits Yamaha's RZ500. From its 16-inch front wheel to its 50-degree, vee-four, liquid-cooled two-stroke engine to the tips of its four expansion chambers, this is a motorcycle to lust for. Admittedly, Roberts didn't have a direct hand in developing the RZ, and certain concessions have been made, either to expense or to streetability, that prevent the bike from being a perfect copy of his OW racers. For example, the engine breathes through reed valves instead of the racer's rotary valves, and the frame is mild-steel tubing, not built-up from aluminum. But the RZ is still the closest thing to a 500 GP bike with lights that any manufacturer has dared produce. And although the form might be slightly different, the sensations are unmistakably those of a racebike. From its thin, hard saddle, the RZ feels taut, direct and racer-sharp; so much so, in fact, that you almost have to pinch yourself to keep from conjuring up images of Assen, Spa-Francorchamps and other venues of GP combat.

Nonetheless, there is a hitch to owning this *objet d'motolust*. You can't just waltz down to your Yamaha dealer and buy one, since the RZ500 isn't for sale in the U.S., not now and perhaps not ever, largely because the two-stroke smoke the bike leaves in its wake leaves the EPA aghast. True, rumor has it that Yamaha is

Continued

testing a catalytic-convertor-equipped version of the RZ, but rumors also suggest that the extra heat and weight such devices bring have not made for encouraging results. The RZ's future as a U.S. model is uncertain at best.

Such mere trifles couldn't prevent us from laying hands on one, though. We secured our test bike through Exotic Motorcycle Imports, P.O. Box 311, Harbor City, California 907100-0311. We had to find out for ourselves just how talented this ultimate repliracer was.

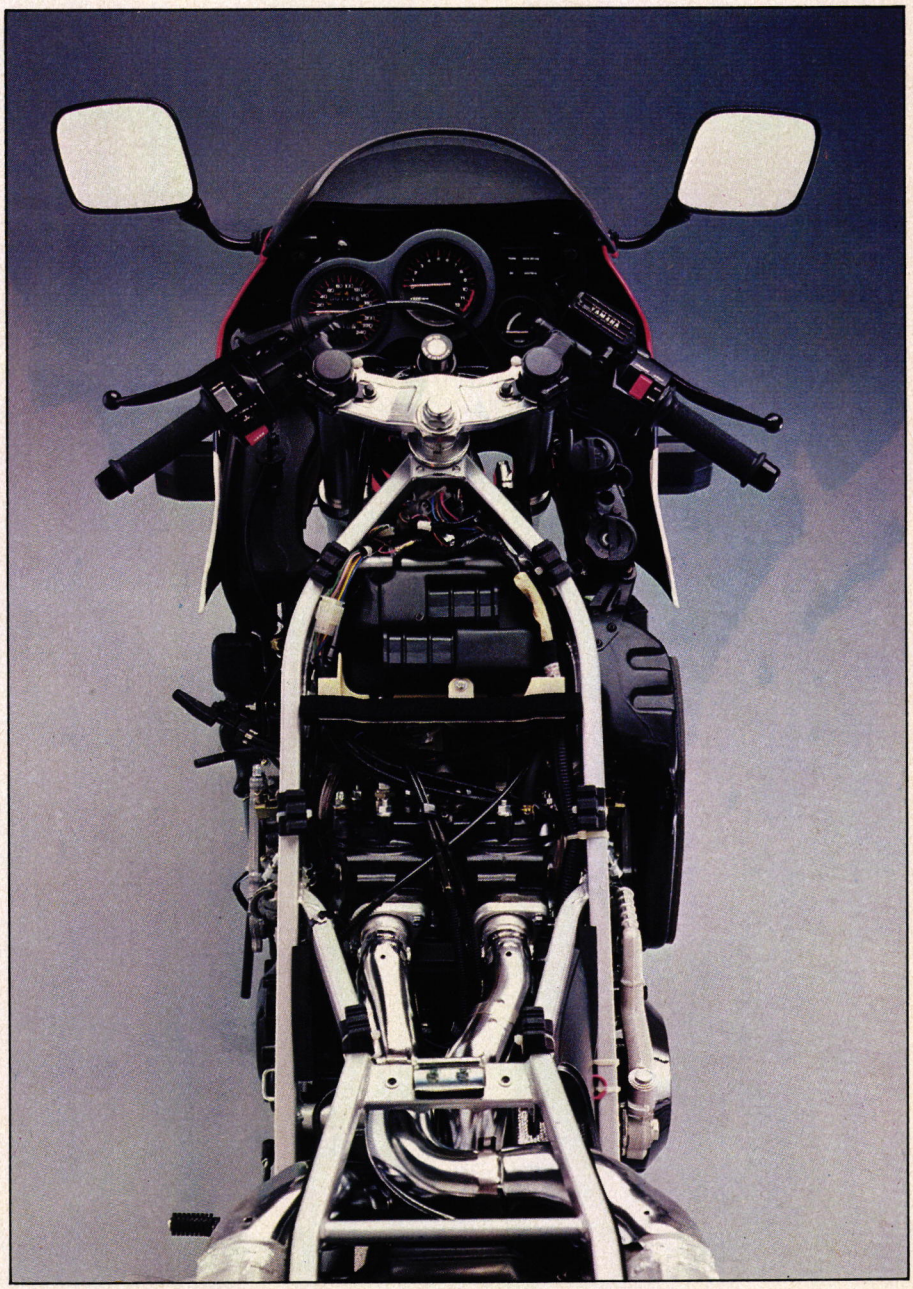
We weren't disappointed. Both at Willow Springs Raceway (see "Will The Real Kenny Roberts Please Hang Off," page 22) and on the street, the RZ500 responds with a phenomenal precision that firmly underscores its racetrack heritage. That precision sets the RZ apart from ordinary motorcycles; you *sense* it through the clip-on handlebars and through the taut, stiffly sprung chassis. On the RZ, a rider feels as if he's tapped right into the motorcycle's nerve centers, and the bike reacts with a crispness and directness that makes other sportbikes seem loose and sloppy by comparison.

This is not a lazy man's motorcycle, though; a fair degree of rider effort is required to make the RZ turn at speed. Its steering is somewhat heavy and slow, more so than we've come to expect from middleweight sportbikes, and especially so considering the bike's chassis dimensions. The 500 has a 54-55-inch wheelbase (almost identical to the RZ350's), a 16-inch front wheel, a 26-degree steering head angle and 95mm of trail (the same angle as, and 10mm less trail, incidentally, than Kenny Roberts' Daytona-winning OW69 racebike).

Such steering geometry might reasonably indicate that the RZ could out-turn its own shadow, but such is not the case. As a result, the bike has to be pitched decisively into corners. You can get the RZ through a series of tight esses as fast as any other sportbike around, but you have to act quickly and snap the bike in to do so. And the slowish steering pays off in terms of stability. Through 120-mph sweepers, the bike inspires great confidence; it feels almost as if it had grown right up out of the pavement.

Certainly, the firm springing and damping contribute greatly to the RZ's poise at speed, keeping the bike composed through bumpy turns. That's particularly true of the fork, which provides a sure-footed feel on smooth or lumpy pavement during spirited romps through the twisties. The fork, unlike the shock, offers no adjustment capability other than oil volume. The single Yamaha-built deCarbon shock, located underneath the aluminum swingarm, adjusts both for spring preload and rebound damping. For fast riding, we set the threaded preload adjuster to the second position (of five) and selected the third rebound damping setting (of seven). With the suspension adjusted to those settings—or even softer—the RZ has cornering clearance to spare; you have to crank it over to alarming angles before the footpegs drag.

In handling, then, the RZ500 is a marvel. And the way this motorcycle scorches out of turns is even more exhilarating. But you have to work to get the most from the engine. The bike has tall gearing, which you notice instantly from the amount of revs and clutch-slipping necessary to get away from a stop, and later by the RZ's amazing 136-mph top speed. Plus, the 500 feels almost painfully short of low-end and midrange power. The power actually starts to build around 6000 rpm, and the motor explodes into its powerband at 7000. Then the bike takes off like a king-size bottle-rocket, and you have to shift quickly to keep the engine from over-revving. The transition from barren midrange to healthy top-end is smoother than it sounds, though; the bike seldom wheelies or lights up its rear tire when the power comes on. And when



RZ's engine is buried in a maze of airboxes, cables and carburetors

Dense packaging puts space at a premium.

the vee-four *does* come on the pipe, it can leave other middleweights for dead. Not even its 12.053-second/112.64-mph quarter-mile time does justice to the way this motorcycle accelerates.

Such remarkable acceleration demands braking performance of equal caliber, and, for the most part, the RZ's brakes are up to the task. All three radially vented discs are pinched by opposed-piston calipers, and the system provides stopping power that's better than average. Still, the rear brake offers more precise control and feedback than the front, which on our test bike had a slightly spongy feel. Perhaps the hydraulically actuated anti-dive units contributed to the sponginess; they certainly didn't do anything they were supposed to do—such as reduce front-end dive during hard braking. The RZ deserves better.

The RZ deserves better tires, too, particularly in the rear. The stock Yokohama rubber works acceptably well for up to eight-tenths riding, but when you're *really* hustling through turns, the back end slides occasionally, although predictably. Stickier rubber would better suit die-hard go-fast riders, and let them use the RZ's capabilities to the fullest.

It might be easy to dismiss the tires' performance as part of Roberts' influence; he prefers to steer his bike by sliding the rear end around. But Roberts also prefers an 18-inch front wheel and a steeper steering head angle than the RZ's. These discrepancies don't diminish the RZ's greatness; they merely point out the differences between it and the bike Yamaha claims it's based on, the OW70 (Roberts' '83 GP bike).

In engine configuration, though, the RZ's OW parentage is clear. Both bikes use 50-degree, vee-four, liquid-cooled two-stroke motors. The RZ's engine has two crankshafts, and is essentially two 180-degree parallel twins geared together in tandem. Both bikes also have Yamaha's Power Valve System, which alters the height of the exhaust ports according to rpm, in order to bolster low-

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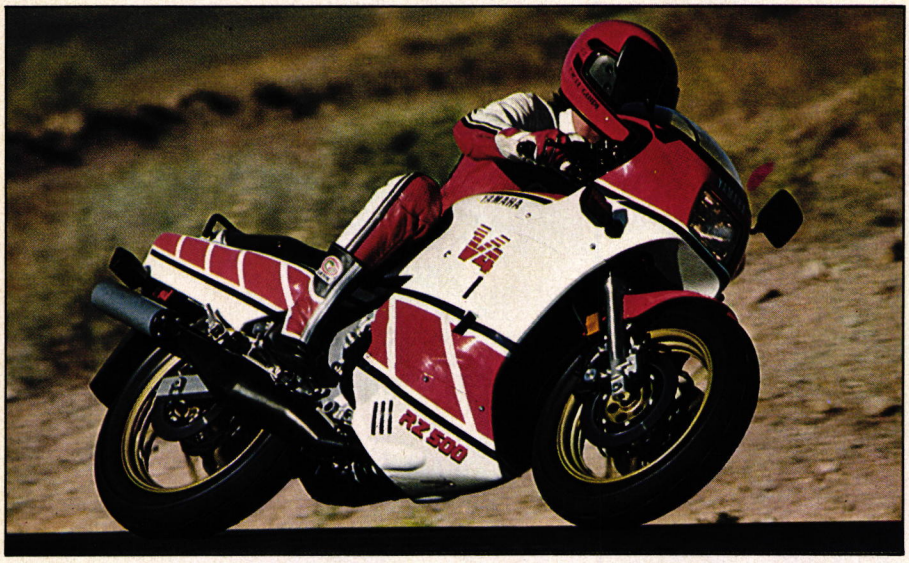
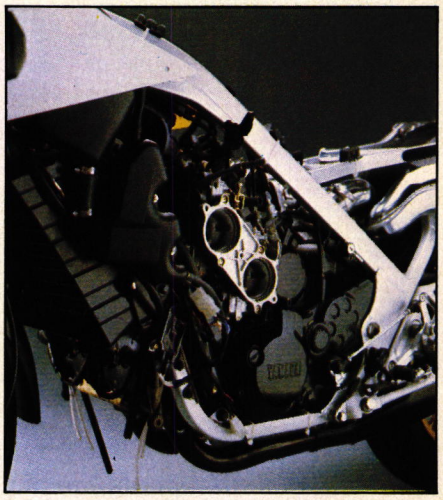




Vee-four motor resembles that of the OW70

And cranks out class-leading power.

end and midrange power. The RZ uses barrel-shaped Power Valves, though, whereas the OW70 bike had flat, guillotine-type valves.

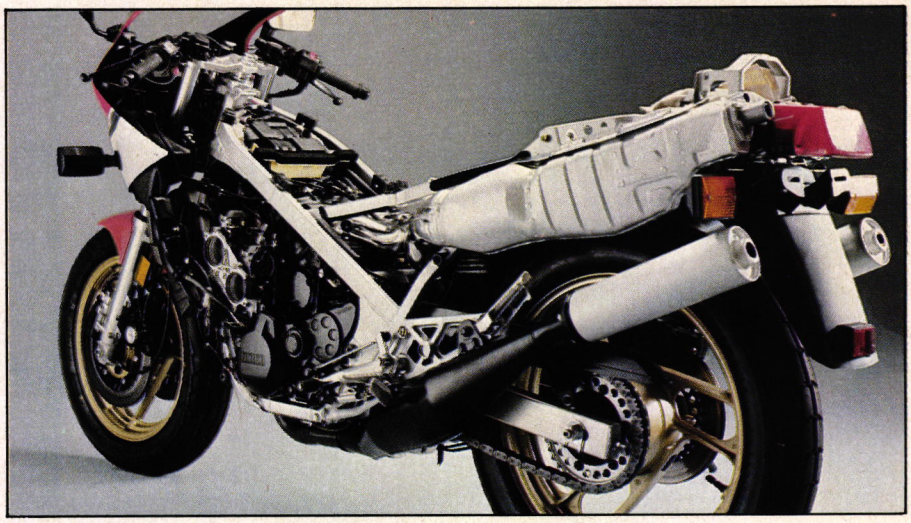
The RZ500 inhales through different style valves than the GP bike, as well. The OW has rotary-valve induction, but the RZ breathes through *two* different types of reed valves: crankcase reeds for the front pair of cylinders, and conventional, piston-port reed valves for the rear pair. Plus, the Roberts-replica bike incorporates a gear-driven counterbalancer to cancel out engine vibration.

And, initially, the counterbalancer seems to work. The RZ feels smooth at freeway speeds, with only an almost imperceptible amount of vibration coming through the grips. But the effects of the low-level vibration are cumulative: Long before the 6.5-gallon fuel tank goes on reserve, your hands begin to tingle. And when the engine is in its best-power zone, the grips, pegs and tank buzz furiously.

There are other obstacles to long-term comfort aboard the RZ, too. The Roberts-signature riding position, for instance, that feels so fine and natural when you're zooming along the backroads, just feels cramped and plain uncomfortable everywhere else. Nor does the suspension offer much in terms of comfort. True, the fork and shock (set full-soft) take care of small paving irregularities surprisingly well. Over large bumps and holes, though, you'll wonder if the suspension is moving at all. Like the riding position, the suspension is configured more for the backroads than for freeways and city streets.

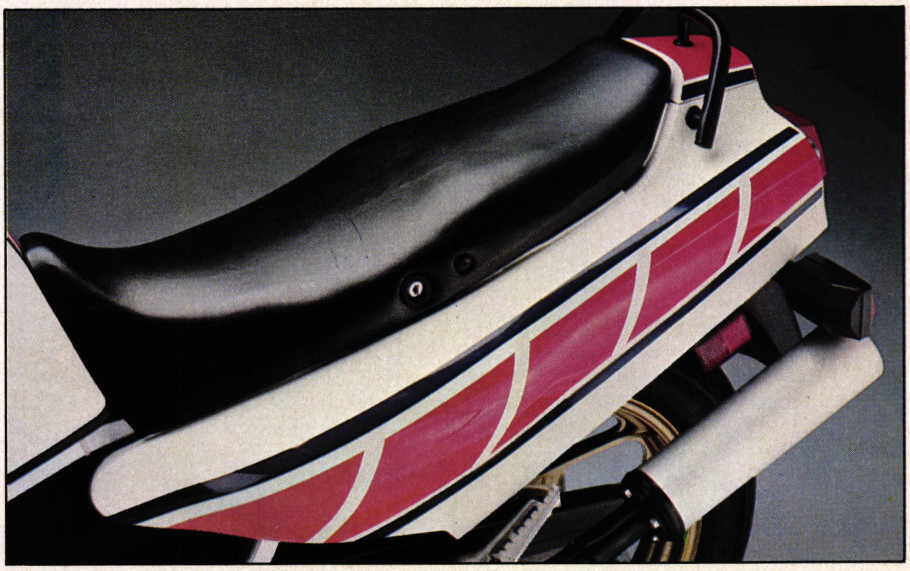
Carping about the Yamaha's lack of comfort might seem pointless, since you can't buy one in this country—at least, not through a Yamaha dealership. But if you could, or if you could just *ride* one, we guarantee you'd be as impressed with its pure-sport performance as we are. Sure, there are middleweight sporters that turn quicker, and ones that are more comfortable. But not one of them can equal the this motorcycle's sheer speed, and no other production streetbike we've ridden has the taut, unvarnished, racer-like feel of the RZ500.

And if you could experience that sensation, the bike slicing through turn after turn, the motor's exhaust note rising to a warbling, chattering wail, you'd be convinced that the RZ500 is—in feel, if not in specification—every inch the repli-racer it claims to be. ●



Strip away the bodywork and the RZ500's racetrack breeding becomes clear

The closest thing to a 500 GP bike with lights.



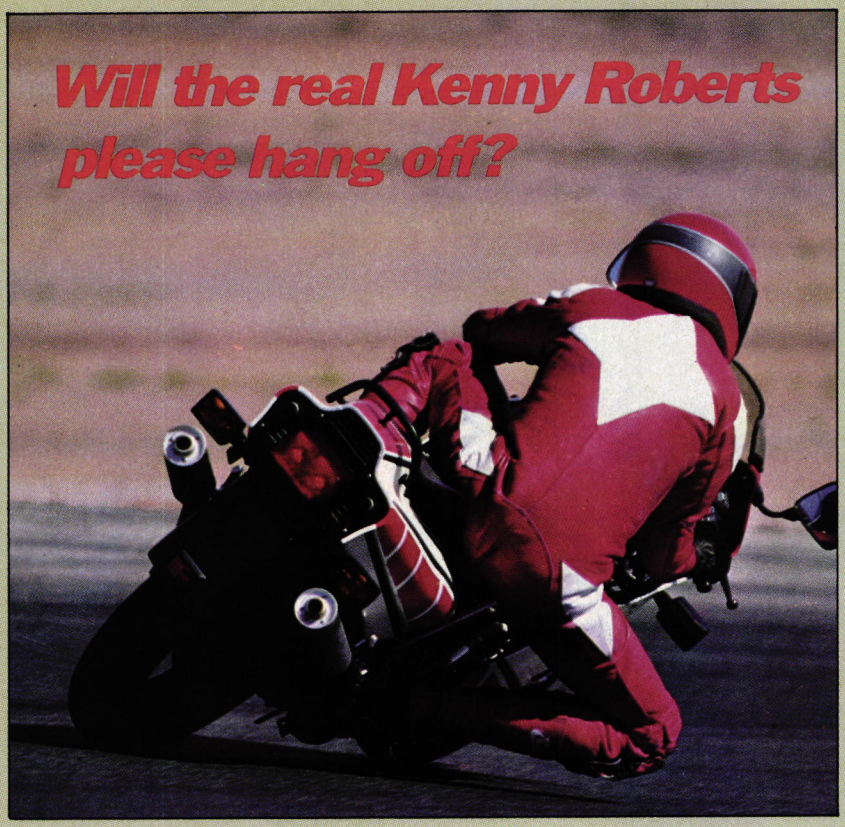
Bulging sidepanels conceal rear cylinders' expansion chambers

Hidden underneath a hard seat of power.

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Yamaha RZ500–'84	12.053/112.64	136	439	N/A
Honda VF500F Interceptor–'84	12.484/106.00	126	419	123
Kawasaki GPz550–'84	12.559/105.38	123	436	136
Suzuki GS550ES–'84	12.675/103.68	123	444	137
Yamaha FJ600–'84	12.468/105.63	126	435	129
Yamaha RZ350–'84	13.529/97.61	111	357	122

Will the real Kenny Roberts please hang off?



• I used to envy Kenny Roberts. Not for his roadrace skills, formidable though they are, but because he got to ride some of the trickest, high-tech toys ever to roll onto a racetrack. I don't envy him anymore. I got my thrills on Yamaha's RZ500 at Willow Springs Raceway, where, in one afternoon, I finally erased all my frustrations about Roberts having the key to the toyshop.

The major difference betwen the RZ500 and practically every other streetbike I've ridden on a racetrack is the RZ's willingness to go precisely where it's pointed. The bike's predictable steering and utter lack of handling quirks allows a rider to keep his attention completely focused on the track, making the RZ feel even less like other streetbikes and more like a racer.

This doesn't mean you get a free ride, though. As with any racebike, you have to provide a little input, in the RZ's case, a little body English to direct it into the turn. And it's this required body English that makes you feel even more like you're living in Roberts' leathers, because you start to hang off the seat just like you've seen KR do so many times before. Subtly, your riding style changes, and you start to feel like King Kenny in full-charge mode, about to pick off some backmarker.

Those are the impressions the RZ gives at about eight-tenths—café-racing speed. But at race speed, the RZ begins to expose its shortcomings, foremost of which are a stiffly sprung fork, an ineffective anti-dive system and fade-prone brakes. The RZ's fork transmits road surface irregularities enough that it begins to wag the clip-on handlebars ever so slightly through high-speed corners. It's not a tank-slapping wobble, but there's enough motion to distract you when you first start pushing the RZ hard. After a while, the slight right-left fork movement feels almost second nature, and it's easy to concentrate on the track ahead.

But it's the RZ's braking system that prevents it from being a top-line, Kenny-clone racer. The anti-dive does little if anything to prevent the fork from nosing down under hard braking, and the brakes start to fade noticeably after just a few hot laps. Despite those shortcomings, the RZ500 in stock trim is one of the best-balanced roadbikes to roll onto a racetrack. The chassis is taut, the shifting and handling are crisp, and the engine has plenty of power, especially so for a 500cc motor.

Still, the RZ500's biggest virtue on the racetrack is how it makes you feel. And the best two words to describe that sensation are: Kenny Roberts. This bike was patterned after KR's Grand Prix racers, and a lot of his racetrack personality found its way into the streetbike—not a bad thing at all. There is only one KR, but Yamaha has seen fit to make available as many Kenny-clones as there are RZ500s. *—Dain Gingerelli*

Ride Reviews

• Never before have I ridden a streetbike that was so confidence-inspiring at the racetrack. The RZ500 made me feel like King Kenny the Second as I powerslid out of turns. The vee-four RZ works well on the street, too, and its fierce personality puts me into attack mode at the first smell of asphalt.

But the RZ also is the heaviest 500 I've ever ridden, and its mechanically intimidating engine makes some of the most uncivilized clanking and whining ever heard outside of a Violent Fems concert. I used to think that the 500 Interceptor was a prime example of technological overkill, but the Honda now seems hopelessly dated compared to the Yamaha. Finally, despite all of the RZ's superlative performance, Yamaha makes an even better streetbike that you *can* buy today. It's called an FJ1100.

—Paul Van Zuyle

• When I got off the RZ500, my knees felt like they might never bend again. My back was hunched, and my ears felt like they had been glued to the on-stage monitors at a Blasters concert. This was one of the loudest, most uncomfortable, least practical machines I'd ever ridden. And I loved it.

The RZ is one of very few streetbikes that can get away with so many faults. It's meant to do only one thing, and it does that one thing very well. It takes relatively normal people and changes them; it makes them feel like King Kenny. I'm not saying that you can hop on the Yamaha and go score a GP victory. But it makes you *feel* like you could win a GP— even if you're riding to the corner store. And whether that feeling is fact or fantasy, the RZ500 is the only bike that provides it.

—Ron Lawson

• You're not going to get many bad comments about the RZ500 from me. Sure, the suspension needs further refinement, and the top exhaust pipes heat your undercarriage as if you were the fall guy in a Tom and Jerry cartoon. That's OK; the way I figure it, the RZ was never meant to be ridden for more than 100 miles or so at a stretch (the approximate distance of a Grand Prix), anyway.

And taking the RZ500 that distance over practically any thoroughfare—twisty or otherwise—puts me in a world that, until now, has been explored only by the likes of Kenny Roberts and Eddie Lawson. The RZ makes me feel like the only difference between them and me is a factory contract. The RZ does everything I want it to, giving me the vicarious thrills of GP racing, but without the risks. *—Dain Gingerelli*

Continued

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Yamaha RZ500 — street

MANUFACTURER: Yamaha Motor Co. 2500 Shingai Iwata-Shi Shizuoka-ken, 438 Japan

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $4995 (Canadian)

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled two-stroke 50-degree tandem vee-four
Port arrangement . . . . . Front cylinders: one crankcase-reed-valve-controlled intake, five transfers, one exhaust
Rear cylinders: one reed-valve-controlled intake, four transfers, one exhaust
Bore and stroke . . . . . 56.4mm x 50.0mm
Displacement 499.7cc
Compression ratio (corrected) 6.6:1
Engine redline . . . . . 10,000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . four 26mm Mikuni slide/needle
Air filter . . . . . washable oiled foam element
Lubrication . . . . . oil injection
Starting system . . . . . primary kick
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 196-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 5.5-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 2.226:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . #530 O-ring chain (⅝-in. pitch, ⅜-in. width); 2.533:1 (38/15) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.400	13.532	5.69
II	1.684	9.495	8.70
III	1.364	7.691	10.74
IV	1.167	6.580	12.55
V	1.043	5.881	14.04
VI	0.958	5.402	15.29

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . 37mm stanchion tube diameter/5.0 in. (127mm)
Rear . . . . . single Yamaha shock, 7-position adjustable rebound damping, 14mm spring-preload range/5.1 in. (130mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 9.9-in. (252mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . double-action hydraulic caliper, 9.2-in. (233mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 120/80V16 Yokohama F101 tubeless
Rear . . . . . 130/80V18 Yokohama R101 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

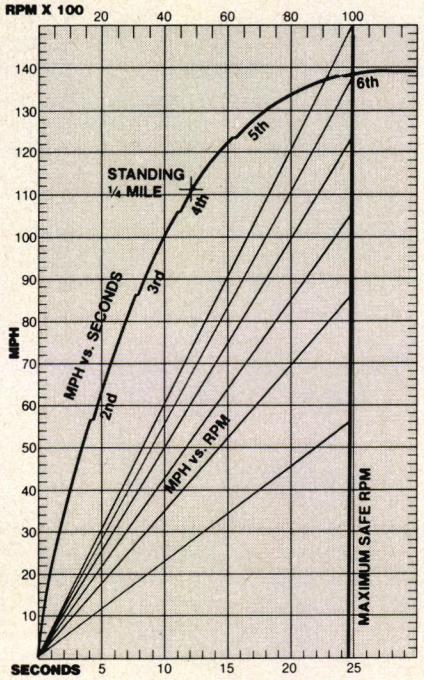
Weight . . . . . 439 lbs. (199.1kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 46.7% front, 53.3% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 904 lbs. (410kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 425 lbs. (193kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 54.0 to 55.1 in. (1371 to 1400mm)
Seat height . . . . . 30.9 in. (785mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 25.2 in. (640mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 14.6 in. (371mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 5.6 in. (143mm), at lower cowling
Steering head angle . . . . . 26.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 3.74 in. (95mm)
Frame . . . . . box-section mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 2.1 qt. (2.0/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 6.5 gal. (24.5/), including 1.1 gal.(4.0l) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, coolant temperature gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 25 to 37 mpg (11 to 16 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 31 mpg (13 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 163 to 241 miles (262 to 388km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . 28 to 41 miles (45 to 66km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 31 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 57 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 12.053 sec., 112.64 mph (181 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 136 mph (219 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . N/A
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . N/A

WARRANTY: N/A

AVAILABLE COLOR: red-white-and-blue only



All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS

COMING SOON

• We've seen the rest, now here's the best—at least as far as BMW touring riders are concerned: the K100RT. Although delivery to U.S. dealerships might be delayed slightly, (see Hard Cash) the RTs are scheduled for arrival soon. The K100RT, equipped with a touring fairing and twin saddlebags, continues the no-frills tradition of the venerable Boxer it replaces. No "state-of-the-art" electronic gadgetry or digital speedometer on this German mileage-maker; such things never appeared on BMWs, and the K100RT is no exception. Understated elegance sums up this latest-version Beemer.

• Yamaha has introduced a new machine for the home market, a 250cc single-cylinder sportbike. The SRX250 is so new, though, that a few of the options planned for his twin-cam, four-valve sporter are not yet available. A couple of the pieces planned for this package are a handlebar-mounted quarter-fairing and a solo-seat cowling, a la RZ350LC. Once those cosmetic parts become available, so will the second version of this new Yamaha single: the SRX250F.

• Reinhold Kraft is at it again. In the past, the West German Egli importer has taken production Eglis and turned them into one-off specials. But this time he's taken on a bit more ambitious project: He's commissioned Target Design to lay the groundwork for an Egli/Kraft endurance racer. Starting with a basic Egli chassis once again, Reinhold Kraft will be using a highly tuned 1000cc Kawasaki engine to power this long-distance runner. By the time you're reading this, the first Egli/Kraft Kawasaki Special prototypes will be off the drawing boards and heading for the racetrack. Look for them later this year.

• Don't bother looking for this just-released 125cc motocrosser from CZ of Czechoslovakia, though; you probably won't be seeing it on American tracks. This new machine appears hopelessly lost in the '60s as far as MX technology goes. With its air-cooled engine, four-speed transmission, twin-shock suspension and drum brakes, the bike's main claim to fame is a new port layout, a design worked out during last year's world-championship competition. Don't hold your breath waiting for any first-place CZ finishes against the highly tuned eighth-liter onslaught from the Orient, though.

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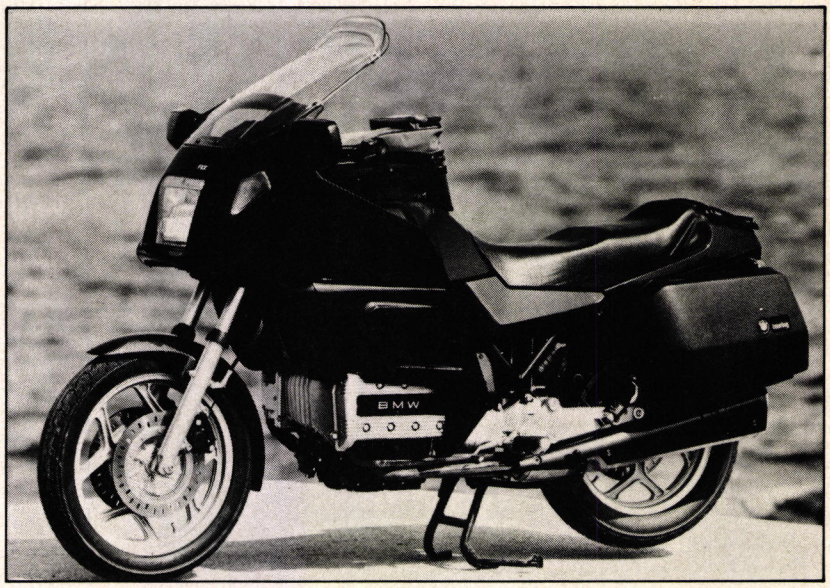

Labor problems in Germany will postpone the K100's U.S. introduction

But some touring riders won't mind the wait for this top-of-the-line RT.

Yamaha's latest twin-cam, four-valve single comes complete with a sportbike flair

But that special SRX250 feeling will be confined to Japan—for now.

ANY OTHER OPEN IS JUST A

Sure, four-stroke enduro bikes are easier to ride than two-strokes. But it's tough to get excited about them.

Unless you're talking about the 1984 Honda XR500R and XR350R. Extremely lightweight thumpers that have won some of the world's most challenging races. Without challenging the rider.

The Baja 1000. Parker 400. San Felipe 250. And ISDE Qualifiers to name a few.

Our XRs offer more than displacement. They offer high technology as well.

Such as our exclusive Radial Four-Valve Combustion chamber (RFVC). Its hemispherical shape, narrow valve angle and centralized spark plug location permits more rapid, efficient combustion and greater power.

A pair of carburetors work together to produce smooth power delivery from idle up to redline. One carb handles low-rpm requirements. As the engine revs higher, a unique

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. Designed for off-road, operator use only. XRs may not meet noise regulations in some states. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. ©1983 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda, Dept. 736-UG4, Box 9000, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

CLASS THUMPER BIG BORE.

linkage progressively opens the other carb for maximum mid-range and top-end performance.

That's why no other four-stroke can match the quality of power a Honda generates. Nor the quality ride.

Because only Honda can offer Pro-Link™ rear suspension. A fully-adjustable system that offers truly progressive spring and damping rates. Pro-Link takes the most radical whoops and jumps in stride while it remains compliant for smaller bumps.

And with massive air-adjustable forks, hydraulic front disc brakes and advanced frame geometry, each XR offers great handling in a lightweight package.

The Honda XR500R and XR350R.

Ride anything else and you're just killing time.

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER

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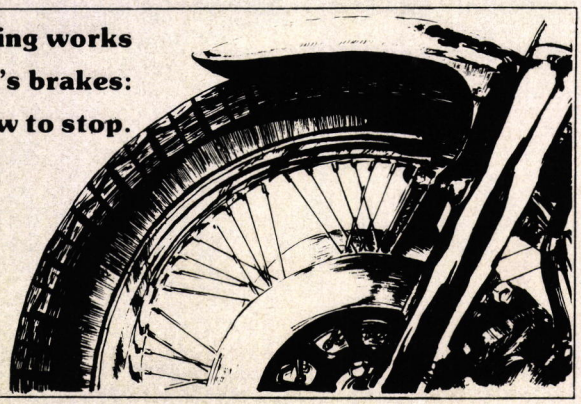
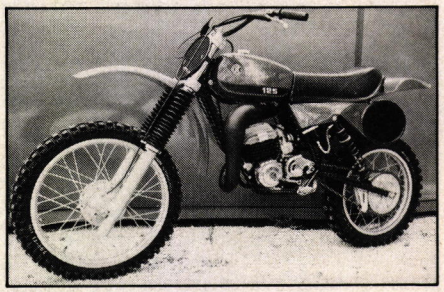


AMA

American Motorcyclist Association,
P.O. Box 141, Westerville, Ohio 43081

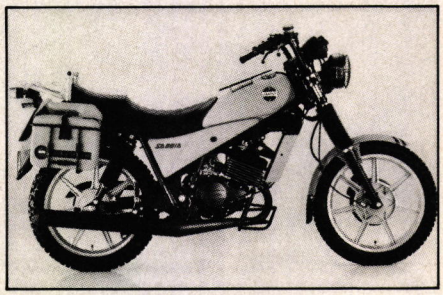
Egli, Kraft and Target team up once again

Taking aim on endurance racing.



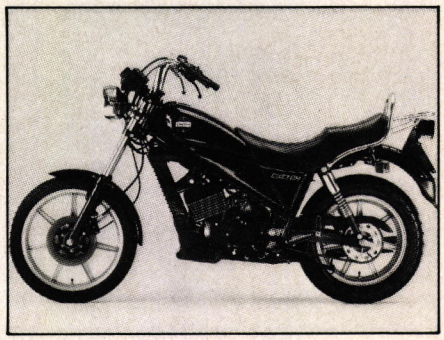
CZs are forgotten but not gone

And the latest is this 125cc MXer.



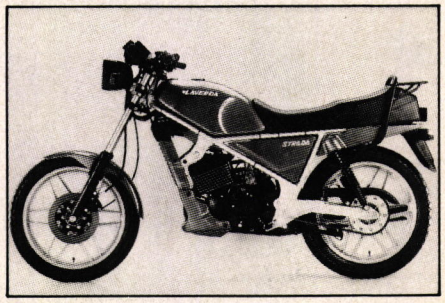
Laverda's Sabbia is no sport-tourer

It's a utility-version 125.



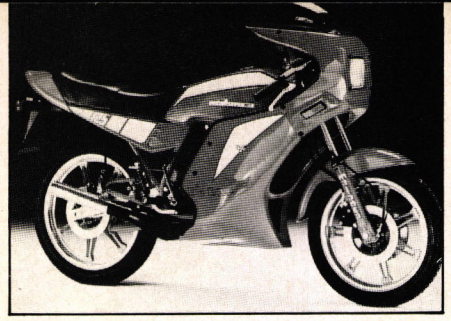
An Italian version of a custom

Loses something in the translation.



Strada 125, Laverda's basic two-stroke single

No frills, but plenty of mpg.



Malanca's OB One fills the bill

For riders long on sport, short on cash.

• If you've watched this column for long, you're familiar with the RGA 1000, RGS 1000 and Corsa-model Laverdas. But did you know that triple-cylinder sportbikes aren't the only two-wheelers to roll out of that company's Breganze works? For years, Laverda has offered a complete range of small-displacement machines, bikes such as the '84-model LB125s. The 125s are powered by single-cylinder, liquid-cooled two-strokes, and are available in a variety of styles based on the same chassis, using parts supplied by Marzocchi, Brembo, Motoplat and Dell'Orto. Three of the machines include the go-anywhere military-model Sabbia; the plain, street-version Strada; and an American-cruiser-influenced Custom. Laverda is best known in the United States for 1000cc sportbikes, but in Europe, where gasoline can cost $3.50 per gallon, tiddlers are big business.

• Another Italian 125 just released also demonstrates how European riders have learned how to cope with the price of gasoline: simply scale down the fun. The Malanca OB One, a fully faired, twin-cylinder replriacer, is a perfect example of that approach. Buzzing around the streets on this liquid-cooled low-boy, with its clip-ons and rearsets, would certainly raise a few smiles—affordably.

FEDERAL CASES

• The AMA is taking up the fight against the 55-mph national speed limit. After polling its membership and finding that 92 percent of its members are opposed to the double-nickel, the Association's Government Relations Department is headed to Capitol Hill. But it won't be easy to convince Congress that the individual states are better suited to set the speed limits for their highways. The 55-mph maximum originally was intended as a temporary fuel-conservation measure during the '73-'74 oil crisis, but is now claimed by highway safety activists to be responsible for a decrease in traffic fatalities. Detractors point out that this conclusion ignores factors such as improved highways, safer vehicles and the lower number of miles traveled by American drivers. The AMA, now siding with the Citizens' Coalition for Rational Traffic Laws (CCRTL) and other groups, disagrees, and contends that each state should be allowed to set its own speed limits based on local highway design, traffic volume and road conditions. Rob Rasor, the AMA's Government Relations Director, has urged all riders opposed to the 55-mph limit to notify their U.S. representatives and senators. "Without the active backing of motorcyclists from all over the country," he says, "we don't expect to get very far."

• The AMA also has monitored the recent push in a number of states to require no-fault insurance for motorcycles, and concluded that what might work for cars does not necessarily apply to two-wheelers. Citing statistics that show motorcyclists usually are not the cause of traffic accidents, the association's position is that a mandate for no-fault insurance (coverage in which the insurance company is responsible for the claims of its client) could result in riders being unfairly burdened by the no-fault requirement. This type of coverage, and the expected frequency of claims against it, could double or triple the price of existing motorcycle policies. At present, Hawaii is the only state requiring first-party, no-fault bike insurance, though H-603, a bill in the Hawaii House, would exclude motorcycles from the state's current no-fault requirement. Connecticut, however, has three bills pending that would require no-fault coverage for motorcycles.

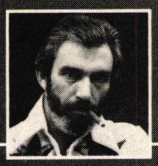
• The Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) has named Wisconsin as the recipient of its State Recognition Award and Public Information Award for 1983. Wisconsin's MSF recognition was due to the state's rider-education program and for its motorcycle-awareness programs aimed at the general public through TV, radio and newspaper advertising campaigns. The rider-ed program trained 1148 students during '83 without using any federal funds. Wisconsin's Department of Transportation also declared a motorcycle awareness month during the year and produced a film, "Riding High," documenting the effects of alcohol on riding skills. During '83, Wisconsin's motorcycle fatality rate dropped 12.6 percent below the 1982 level.

• Changes in Missouri's motorcycle-licensing procedure prompted the MSF to name it the most-improved state in the nation. Last year, the state started using the Motorcycle Operator Manual and the Motorcycle Operator Skill Test at its 144 motorcycle license-examining stations. The tougher license requirements apparently are keeping less-qualified riders off the streets. With the current tests, 15 percent of the applicants fail; only 1 percent failed the previous tests.

HARD CASH

• It's been a full year now since the ITC tariff on over-700cc imports took effect, and Harley-Davidson, petitioner for that tariff, has announced its report card for the period. Since the tariff, Harley's market share has climbed to 20 percent of all the heavyweights sold in this country, and for the first time in three years, the company has shown a slight profit. H-D has also rehired 400 of its laid-off employees. Harley's chairman, Vaughn Beals, notes most of the company's gains are due to revamped production and assembly techniques, a revitalized product line with new

Continued



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models and a new powerplant, restructured marketing techniques and a 40-percent reduction in the company's break-even point. Beals does credit the tariff for averting a "fire sale" on leftover Japanese heavyweight inventory that could, in his words, "wipe us off the face of the map." The tariff has now dropped 10 percent, to 39.4 percent, but Beals believes it still is necessary to give Harley a chance against foreign manufacturers. "We're not out of the woods yet, but we're working hard to get there," he concluded.

• And a $38 million government contract for H-D won't hurt that effort. Harley's York, Pennsylvania division has just been awarded the contract to produce 300,000 practice-bomb casings for the U.S. Navy and Air Force. This is the third consecutive year Harley-Davidson/York has won such a contract. The '84 government order, however, is more than twice the amount of previous years.

• Aside from helping out Harley-Davidson, the ITC tariff might also be the best thing that could have happened for Kawasaki's Lincoln, Nebraska plant. In the past, the plant has undergone slowdowns, layoffs and four-day work-weeks. Since the tariff, however, the Lincoln plant has been increasingly busy building motorcycles 700cc and larger, in addition to Jet Skis and three-wheelers. The Lincoln plant was originally part of Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A., but is now a separate company, Kawasaki Motors Manufacturing Corp., U.S.A.

Celebrating Kawasaki's 10 years at Lincoln

And new vigor for the U.S. plant.

• BMW's bike plant in West Berlin isn't the site of much celebration, though. A strike called by IG Metall, a European metalworkers' union, caused BMW to halt production in the middle of May, closing its doors to the 750 workers employed there. While BMW itself isn't the target of the strike, certain of its suppliers are, and the lack of production inventory caused the shutdown. The metalworkers' walkout, which European industrial experts predict could involve as many as 1.5 million workers, might delay the U.S. introduction of BMW's four-cylinder K100, originally set for mid-July. Once the strike is settled, however, BMW will get the bikes here as quickly as it can. Company spokesmen have mentioned plans to air-freight the delayed K100s to the United States.

• On a smaller scale, Brooklands Motorcycles, the British company manufacturing the 40M Norton Manx replica (October 1983 issue) has reorganized and moved. The bikes, introduced last year, originally were powered by Weslake engines. Weslake, however, has since gone into receivership, leaving Brooklands without an engine supplier. The company now offers its 40M as a rolling-chassis kit, able to accommodate a variety of Japanese-made single-cylinder powerplants. Brooklands can be reached at its new offices at 51 Green Acres, Ludlow, Shropshire, England SY8 1LY.

• In something short of the trauma of a factory shutdown, Harley-Davidson is facing a problem with a significant number of its dealers. Those dealers, unhappy with the factory-run Dealers Advisory Council, have formed a new, separate organization. The group, the National Harley-Davidson Dealers Alliance, reportedly represents 70 percent of Harley's dealers. Spokesmen for NHDDA claim the factory has shown "flagrant indifference to its faithful customers." While Harley-Davidson has shown a profit for '83, the Alliance contends that many of its members have not. To resolve that situation, the group seeks a more active role in management decisions, principally in the pricing of hardware to dealers and the profit margins allowed. After reportedly refusing to meet with Alliance representatives, Harley-Davidson officials have scheduled a conference with the group for later this month. More on this situation as it develops.

• File this under Behind The Scenes. During the past five years, American Honda has donated educational and support equipment worth $3.5 million to technical and vocational schools throughout the country. Honda also sponsors free training seminars for school instructors, programs costing an estimated $200,000 per year. Those efforts led to American Honda recently receiving top honors for Outstanding Achievement by an Organization from the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education.

RUMORS

• Aluminum frames have shown up on a few Japanese streetbikes recently, primarily in the lightweight two-stroke class, but we've heard the manufacturers are having second thoughts about that application of alloy to roadbikes. The biggest problems apparently arise from the side- and centerstands. The aluminum tubing reportedly isn't able to withstand the point loads generated by the stands when the bike is parked, with bent and twisted frame tubes the result. Already, one of the Japanese manufacturers is phasing out its aluminum streetbike frames; look for others to follow that lead.

• In another piece of gossip directly from Japan, our informants tell us Yamaha's liquid-cooled, 16-valve FZ-series engine is just a preview of that company's middleweight future. Sources predict at least one larger-displacement version of Yamaha's new, liquid-cooled, 16-valve DOHC four for '85. The model in the company's lineup most likely to receive the new technology is the current FJ600; that bike's engine already uses the same basic crankcase design as the FZ400, and would be a logical choice for a new liquid-cooled, 16-valve top end.

• Also from Yamaha is a rumor about the company's recently released RZ500 two-stroke vee-fours. Reportedly, there's a limited-production version in the works, one with a serious infusion of horsepower. If our sources are to be believed, this new model vee-four will come through sporting Team Marlboro colors.

• If what we've heard from those in the know at Kawasaki proves true, 1984 could be the last year for the company's GPz550. This story isn't new, but with the 1985 new-model introductions fast approaching, talk of middleweight GPz replacement is on the increase among company insiders. Best reports are that the new Kawasaki middleweight is a liquid-cooled, 16-valve sportbike displacing slightly less than 600cc.

• If that rumor is accurate, though, it casts doubt on the future of a 750cc Ninja for U.S. sale. The debacle of overstocked warehouses, both in the U.S. and in Japan, has been a hard-learned lesson for the Big Four. Manufacturers now are hesitant to build bikes in overlapping market segments, and a 600 and 750 might wind up competing against one another for sales. But while industry analysts acknowledge the soundness of a scaled-down product line from a purely financial point of view, they also point out that the prestigious U.S. Superbike class is for 750cc machines. And a three-quarter-liter Ninja would slide right in. We'll see.

• Another new liquid-cooled four that's generating some rumors is BMW's K100. Although most of the talk about this bike centers on a 750cc triple, there are other possibilities. At the U.S. introduction of the K100, one BMW representative let it be known that a 16-valve head for the K-bike was "more than being considered."

• Finally, we're advised to get ready for yet another up-to-date version of a classic two-wheeler from the English cottage industry, a la Brooklands 40M Manx. Not surprisingly, Brooklands reportedly is building this new bike, too. Unlike the 40M, though, this machine is said to have only the look of a classic; its powerplant, suspension, brakes, electrics, in fact all its working parts, will be current hardware. Most likely the new replibike will be patterned after another English single of the Fifties. It should debut at Cologne.

AFTER THE FACT

• If you've frantically thumbed through the Sears, Roebuck and Co. catalog in search of a Kerker exhaust system reportedly offered there, stop looking. Kerker, after testing the rural markets through Sears, has withdrawn its product due to poor response and unfavorable dealer reaction. But if you absolutely, positively must buy your bike exhaust through Sears mail order, consider Jardine; that company's pipes still are available through Sears.

• An entry on page 16 in last month's Silver Bullet Awards pointed out that by turn-key

touring standards the Harley-Davidson FXRT is almost a stripper. The picture that accompanied the item unfortunately was of a stripper, Harley's own FXRS. Both the FXRS and FXRT were up for inclusion in our Bike Of The Year competition, and the photo of the RS inadvertently was substituted for that of the RT. We regret the error.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• The double-nickel isn't the only reminder of the '74 oil crisis. Over the past 10 years, the U.S. Department of Energy has spent more than $200,000 to store 4.8 billion gas-rationing coupons that were printed but never issued. The coupons, which originally cost $10 million, are now useless; they lack serial numbers, making it impossible to keep track of them. Also, the Department of Energy used the Department of the Treasury's $1-bill plate to print the rationing tickets, and as a result, the coupons work just fine in change-making machines. So now the government has decided to get rid of those decade-old white elephants, and will spend another $145,000 on the project. Crews at the Army's Pueblo, Colorado ammunition dump, the storage site, will shred and bury all those crisp, never-used coupons. When the bulldozers heap a final load of dirt on this monument to bad decision, the score will be: one down, one to go. The coupons will be gone, but the 55-mph national speed limit is still with us.

• The Mille Miglia lives. The classic, 1000-mile Italian roadrace run on public streets was abandoned after it was run in 1957, following a series of horrific accidents. But a special "commemorative" running has been scheduled, and for the first time ever, a motorcycle is entered. Tony Goulding of Great Britain, riding a Slater Bros.-prepared Laverda RGS 1000, will take on the tortuous course, attempting to better legendary F-1 car ace Stirling Moss' record time. During the old Mille

A Brit and his Italobike make moto-history

By running the infamous Mille Miglia.

Continued

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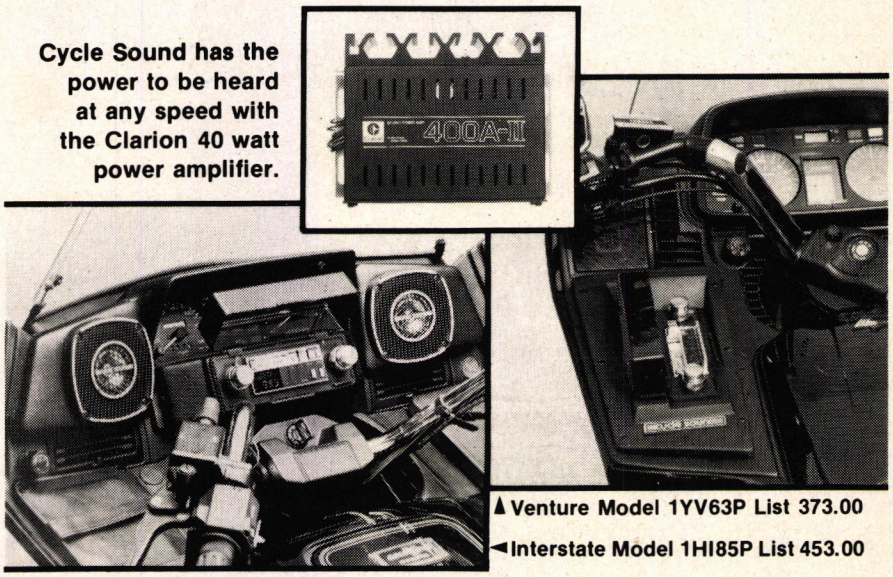

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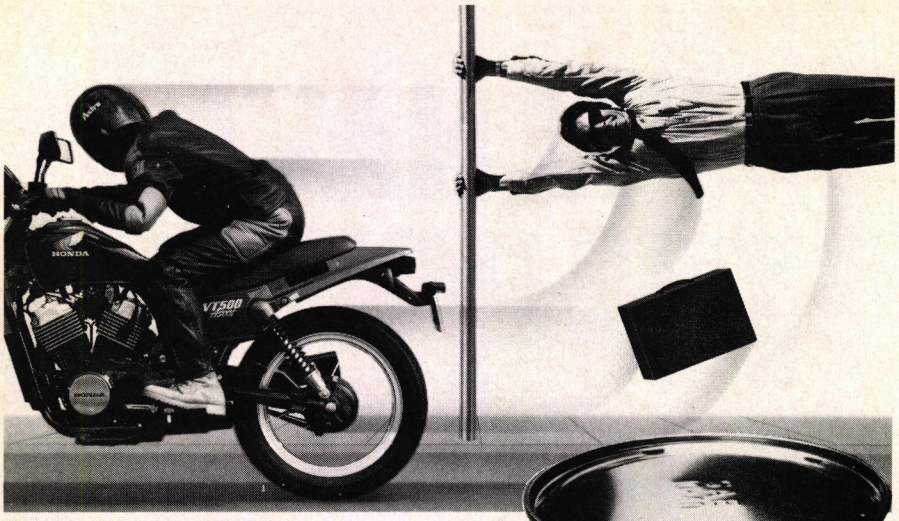

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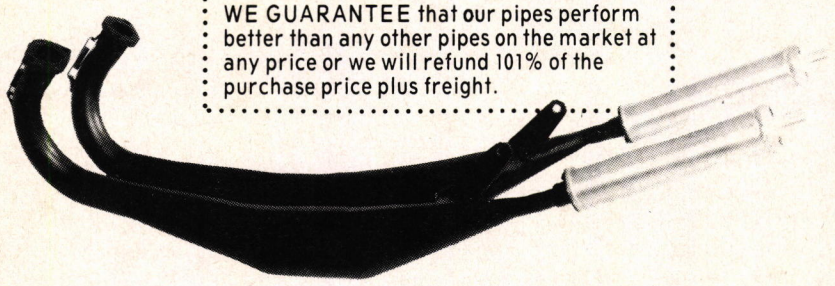

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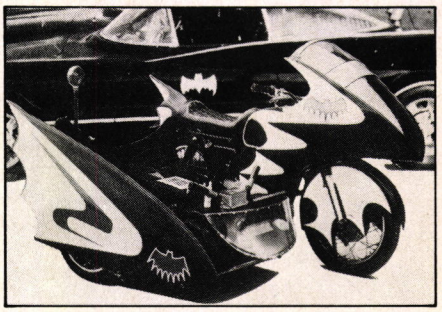
Miglia, the roads were closed to the public, but all practice traditionally was done on open highways with the race machines dodging in and around everyday traffic. Goulding recently made a "practice" run, covering the 1000 miles in 12 hours, 14 minutes for an average of 81.74 mph. If that sounds impressive, consider this: He made the run, through winding mountain passes and over all types of pavement, at night.

• Holy highest bidder, Batman, that Batcycle's on the block! And that George Barris-built Yamaha wasn't the only memorable motorcycle auctioned off when Chicago businessman J.J. Born recently liquidated his $8 million, 150-vehicle "Hollywood-TV Cars of the Stars" museum. Evel Knievel's red-white-and-blue Harley-Davidson XR750 jumpbike was another two-wheeler to leap onto the stage and go down under the auctioneer's gavel. So what's a little glitzy history sell for these days? Well, bidding on Knievel's bike



It wasn't The Joker who paid $9500

When the Batcycle went on the block.

got up to $7000 before the hammer fell. And the Batcycle, complete with its sidecar-mounted, quick-release Jetcart for Robin, rolled out of the Batcave for the last time after its new owner shelled out $9500. The Batmobile itself? It brought in a cool $64,000.

• There's nothing cool about the citizens of Block Island, Rhode Island, though. They're so hot they want to secede from the state, and it's all because of two-wheelers. Mopeds, to be precise. It seems the residents, all 620 of them, have had it up to here with hordes of weekend tourists converging on the island, renting mopeds and promptly crashing. There's no hospital or ambulance service on the island, so the local 12-member rescue squad is left to clean up the aftermath. "It really ruins your own summer," says Lisa Sprague, head of the volunteer unit. "You just get settled on the beach yourself and the beeper goes off." And then there's what the islanders call the "menace factor" of 500 mopeds buzzing around an 11-square-mile landmass. Reportedly, the mopedders pay no attention to private-property signs, riding up driveways, across lawns and even through gardens. The bottom line is that the Block Islanders have had their fill of motorbikes and, if the state of Rhode Island won't ban the two-wheelers, the residents will leave the state. Riders of bigger-bore machines might do well to reconsider any planned trips to Block Island—a civil war is nasty business. •

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EUROBIKES

THE EUROBIKE CONNECTION:

The Untouchables

Have your passports ready; for the really good stuff you still have to cross the Atlantic.

BY JOE KRESS

American sport riders traditionally have looked to Europe for their high-performance connection. When the English motorcycle industry was at its zenith, nimble Britbikes, along with hardware from Germany and Italy, provided a slice of motorcycling unavailable from any other source. On the domestic scene, Harley-Davidsons were a breed apart, hardly sportbikes to compare with what the Europeans were riding. And the Japanese had yet to build motorcycles a serious sport rider might consider. If it was a high-performance sport motorcycle you wanted, it came from Europe.

A lot, obviously, has changed. The once-proud British motorcycle industry is all but gone. In its place, however, is a variety of sportbikes, predominantly Japanese, previously undreamed of. But while the actual source of the sporting hardware has shifted halfway around the globe, the primary marketplace hasn't moved one inch: European dealers are still holding the good stuff.

What about all the Interceptors, Ninjas and FJ1100s in U.S. showrooms? Good as they are, those machines just scratch the surface of what's available to a no-compromise sportbike fanatic. Because of marketing strategies, safety and emissions regulations—and lately, restrictive tariffs—the majority of high-tech, high-speed hardware never hits the waxed linoleum of an American dealership, or the pavement of Yankee backroads.

We've saved you the airfare, though, by gathering a selection of some of the best sport hardware currently for sale in Europe. But don't make the mistake of thinking these machines are forever out of reach. Times change, regulations are revised and markets shift. So look at these bikes with a buyer's eye; what's now sold only in Europe might very well turn up right here. But there are no guarantees; you still might want to renew your passport. Because for now, anyway, Europe is *the* sportbike connection.

Continued

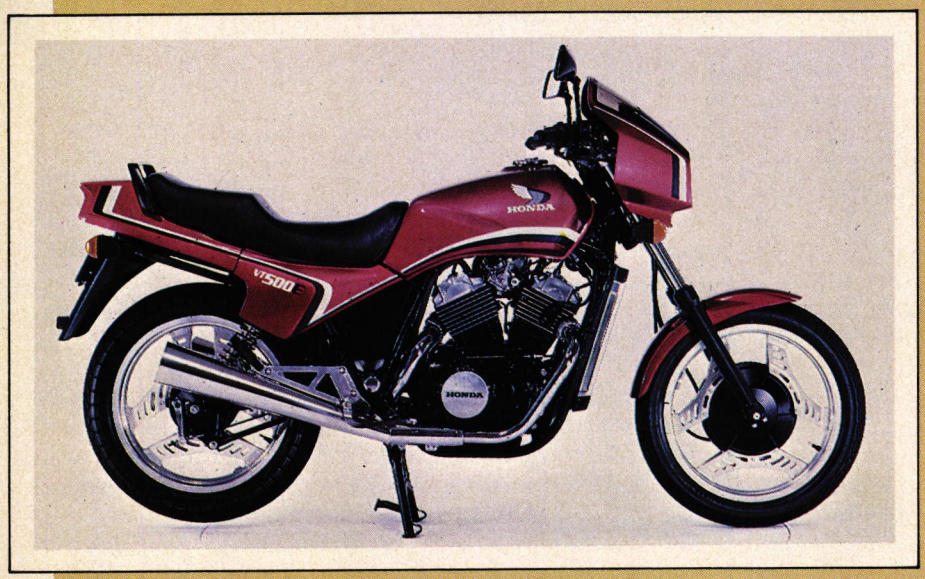
Honda NS250R

• The starting grid is set for the European battle of the street two-strokes. With the introduction of Honda's NS250R, all four Japanese moto-manufacturers are in this race to the finish. Like Kawasaki, Honda has all but taken its 250cc roadracer and put it on the highway. The just-released NS250R is Honda's replacement for its short-lived MVX250, the triple that went out of production scant months after its introduction because of repeated problems with overheated rear cylinders.

But the NS250R is all-new, top to bottom. And this liquid-cooled 90-degree vee-twin is every bit the street racer, owing its very existence to—and even using the same crankcase as—the RS250R racebike. With an all-aluminum frame, ComStar wheels, fork leg covers and even a small sidestand flap in the fairing to equalize the bike aerodynamically, the NS250R is a streetbike that doesn't miss a racetrack trick.

What it does miss, of course, is the boat headed for America. Enticing as it is, the NS250R falls into the look-but-don't-touch category for American streetriders shopping the lightweight class. At least for the time being.

Honda VT500E



• American riders haven't been shy about asking for something like the VT500E. One look at our Letters column or Wishbook section, and the plea comes through loud and clear: Where are the light, economical vee-twin sport machines?

Obviously, they're in Europe. And one of the lightest, most economical and innovative of the breed is Honda's VT500E. While riders on this side of the Atlantic can choose between a crypto-chopper or a flattrack-replica machine based on the six-valve, dual-plug, liquid-cooled Honda twin, riders on the other side of the water have a Euro-version that isn't all dressed up like something it isn't. The VT500E doesn't exist as a fashion statement or to evoke visions of epic dirttrack duels. The E-model is a vee-twin sportbike, nothing more, nothing less.

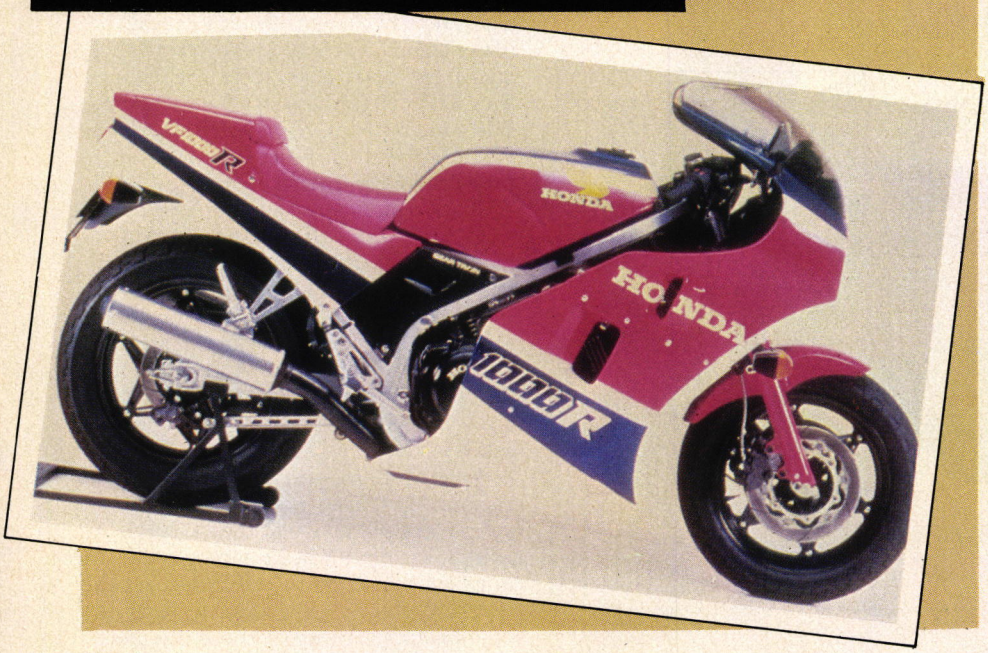
It didn't take much effort on Honda's part to get the bike that way, either. Traditional bodywork, ComStar wheels, a quarter-fairing and inboard disc brakes complete a list of the differences between the continental-bound VT500 and ours. Oh, there's one more difference, the biggest: The "E" tacked on this bike's sidecover badge stands for *Europe*.

Honda VF500FII

• We called the VF500F Honda the best Interceptor ever, but that statement might well raise an eyebrow or two from the European sportriding fraternity. See, the Euroriders have a VF500FII model for comparision, and in a point-for-point sportbike standoff, the American version, half-liter Honda comes out the loser in every category: Horsepower, weight, even aerodynamics; you name it and the Euro-version FII has the edge over the American-model miniceptor.

And there's also one category that doesn't show up on any spec sheet; one that can be just as important as hard numbers generated on a dyno or at a dragstrip: a bike's look, its personality, how it fits into its role. There, the comparison seems even more one-sided. The Euro-model comes in full racing dress, and its American cousin looks naked by comparison. Starting with its black, boomerang-style ComStar wheels and continuing right through to the wind-tunnel-designed, racetrack-proven full fairing, the FII fairly oozes sportbike *stuff*. So the flat statement that the VF500F is the best Interceptor ever needs some modifying. Call it the best sold in America.

Honda VF1000R



• American sportriders might feel smug about the VF1000F Interceptor, but European riders will just point to their version of the bike and smile—or worse, laugh. The cause of that mirth is that the Euro-version VF1000R is everything the American 1000F could have been—but isn't.

Honda's R-version of its liquid-cooled 998cc vee-four supersport machine pulls no punches about its intended mission, not mechnically and not cosmetically. Fully faired with endurance-bike style lighting front and rear, the VF1000R is a no-compromise streetracer. Its blacked-out ComStar wheels, solo seat and racy exhaust system don't hurt that image one bit.

But the Euro-tuned 1000R isn't just looks. Without having to contend with American emissions regulations, and with the addition of gear-driven overhead cams, this version of Honda's vee-four is claimed to pump out 122 horsepower, more than enough to put the motor on the American-model Interceptor. And the fully faired European-R is 10 pounds lighter than its American-version counterpart. Kind of like having your cake and eating it, too. But not in America, not yet.

Continued

Kawasaki KR250

• Two-stroke streetbikes are just coming back into favor in this country, now that Yamaha has shown it's possible to make them U.S.-legal for the EPA Eighties. But these lightning-quick lightweights never went out of style in Europe; during the half-decade or so that we were without street two-strokes, European riders were buzzing them to new highs.

So, now that we finally get the RZ350LC Yamaha, one of the bikes we coveted, the Europeans get Kawasaki's latest, and it seems like we're almost back to where we started. The KR250, more than even the RZ, is a bona fide replica-racer. This 250cc rotary-valved, liquid-cooled tandem-twin is based directly on Kawasaki's championship-winning roadracer. And with its high-and-low pipes, full fairing and an all-aluminum, square-tube frame, the KR250 gives a new finish to the old line about putting lights and directionals on a racer and turning it loose on the streets. Of course, putting a bike in near racing-tune on the public highways doesn't come without drawbacks, and the KR250 is no exception. But we're willing to bet there are a few U.S. riders who gladly would cope.

Kawasaki Z1100R

• Sport streetbikes don't come much purer than Kawasaki's 1000R Eddie Lawson Replica. The bike is patterned after the two-time AMA Superbike-series winner, and is an unadorned straightshooter still available in the United States two years after its role model last spun a wheel in competition. The 1000R is a tribute to a classic, and for riders interested in high-performance substance rather than form, this Kawasaki is top-of-the-heap, bar none.

Check that; European riders have an option. Across the Atlantic, that hot-rod axiom about no substitute for cubic inches still applies, and the proof is the Z1100R, the real top-of-the-heap, no-frills Kawasaki. This lime-green, liter-plus machine is everything the U.S. version is—and more. This one's powered by the DOHC 1089cc eight-valve Four that all but built Kawasaki's street-performance image. And the carbureted European version puts out a claimed 114 horsepower. Riders comparing spec sheets will note that the Z1100R is six horsepower down when compared with the numbers posted by the GPz1100, but the GPz1100 doesn't come close to being the bare-knuckle, backroad brawler this one is.

Laverda RGA 1000 Jota

• Laverda's orange fireball Jota is available in this country right now. So you think there's a sportbike category in which we aren't one-upped by the Europeans? You might think so, but you'd be wrong; the 981cc triple from Italy we're offered loses some of its luster when compared to the bike the Europeans have. Their RGA 1000 Jota is a cut above—and then some.

Actually, this hot-rodded Laverda isn't a direct factory offering. The bike's transformation from full-stock to full-race is handled by Laverda's British concessionaire, Slater Brothers Ltd. But since the specialty work performed doesn't void any warranty to the European buyer, and the machine is readily available, we'll consider it a Euro-version Laverda. And what makes this one more desirable? Its full fairing, for starters, but that's only a beginning. Underneath that fiberglass is an engine that's had a complete high-performance treatment, everything from a ported and polished cylinder head to forged racing pistons to a special, free-flow exhaust. It might not be stock in the strictest sense, but it's sold right off the showroom floor. Provided that showroom is in Europe, of course.

Yamaha FZR400

• We had to slip in a ringer. Looking at all these can't-have Eurobikes might have some U.S. riders considering overseas residency, if only for access to Euro-spec hardware. Well, here's one sportbike that not even the Europeans can get their hands on: Yamaha's FZR400. This bike is brand-new, and so far it hasn't left Japan. On this one, American and European riders are united, both factions want the machine, and neither can have it, not yet.

The FZR is powered by a new engine design from Yamaha, a liquid-cooled inline-four. Actually, this engine has been under development for some time, and both the FJ600 and FJ1100 borrow some of its weight-saving technology. They'd do well to copy its power-making technology, too; Yamaha claims the FZR's 400cc powerplant puts out 65 horsepower.

But while the FZR400 lends out some of its engine technology, it takes in chassis theory developed on other Yamahas. Its lateral-design aluminum frame, for instance, has direct links to the RZ500R racer. But right now there are no marketing links to U.S. showrooms and, for once, none to European dealers, either. •

RIDING IMPRESSION:

Suzuki RG250 Gamma

A motorcycle for places where better can't be bigger.

BY PAUL VAN ZUYLE

Year after year, Americans vote with their wallets for performance motorcycles with big engines. But for enthusiasts in Japan, large-displacement bikes are almost impossible to own, for a variety of geographic and licensing reasons.

The Suzuki RG250 Gamma is one of the most popular examples of the 250cc performers now sold in Japan. Numerous motorcycle clubs exist there just for Gamma owners. And if you're prone to discount 250s simply as foo-foo bikes, take a look at some of the hardware on the RG. You'll find features common to larger sportbikes, such as a 16-inch front wheel on an anti-dive fork, single-shock rear suspension and a full fairing. In addition, the Gamma features an all-aluminum frame, a first for modern production motorcycles.

Nestled inside the frame is a liquid-cooled, two-stroke inline-twin. Like most real two-stroke racers, there is little power until the engine comes on the pipe—for the Gamma, at about 7000 rpm. From there until its 9000-rpm redline, the Suzuki pulls exceptionally hard for a 250. At that point, however, power falls off dramatically; the Gamma's peaky power curve is not far off from that of a 125cc motocrosser.

But the Gamma isn't a MXer, and neither is it a quarter-liter drone. Instead, it's a legitimate sportbike, and a proper test of it includes racetrack time. We found that at Willow Springs, the Gamma's close-ratio, six-speed transmission made it easy to keep the engine in the middle of its powerband.

We also found that the Suzuki was stable, far more than we expected a 308-pound 250 to be. And despite its 16-inch front wheel, the Gamma's steering wasn't especially quick at high speeds. That shouldn't be surprising, though, because Suzuki endowed the RG250 with a 28.5-degree steering head angle, along with 4.0 inches of trail. One surprise *did* come from the Gamma's Full Floater rear suspension, which was sprung very softly for a sportbike.

Although the soft springing helps the Gamma deliver a comfortable ride on the Superslab, you'd never confuse this two-stroke buzzbomb with a touring bike. The engine needs to be downshifted from top gear at least twice for a fast pass, and the seat is little more than an upholstered blue brick. No, the Gamma is much more at home when the road turns curvy and the rider puts the engine on the boil. Then, the RG250 comes into its own, wailing its two-stroke tune and goading the rider to test the limits of his skill.

One limit of the *motorcycle*—and of Japanese motorcycling—came to light, quite literally, during the test. In the midst of the usual turnsignal and high-beam indicator lights on the RG's dash panel, there's a special lamp required by Japanese law that comes on anytime the bike is ridden faster than 50 mph.

You'll probably never get the chance to see how long you can keep that light glowing, as Japanese sport riders pride themselves on doing. For starters, the emissions controls required to make this machine EPA-legal would take a large bite out of the 250's already minimal power. More important, the kinds of physical and legal limitations that helped bring about the production of high-performance 250s in Japan don't exist in the United States.

So you might have to take our word for the Gamma's performance. The Suzuki is tiny—at least by U.S. standards—but it has one important feature in common with the biggest sporting machines sold here. More than just quick around corners, the RG Gamma is the fast track to a Sunday racer's heart. ●

SUZUKI RG250 GAMMA

Manufacturer: Suzuki Motor Co. Ltd.
300 Takatsuka,
Hamamatsu, Japan

Category	street
Suggested retail price	N/A
Engine type	liquid-cooled two-stroke transverse vertical twin
Port arrangement	one piston-controlled intake, one crankcase-reed-valve-controlled intake, two main transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust
Bore and stroke	54.0mm x 54.0mm
Displacement	247.4cc
Compression ratio (corrected)	7.1:1
Carburetion	two 28mm Mikuni slide/needle
Gearbox	6-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Kayaba air-spring, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/4.8 in. (122mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	single Kayaba shock, 14mm spring preload range/ 5.2 in. (133mm)
Wheelbase	54.2 to 55.3 in. (1376 to 1404mm)
Weight	308 lbs. (139.7kg)
Steering head angle	28.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.0 in. (102mm)

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

RIDING IMPRESSION:

Beta TR32

Motorcycling's slow sport picks up speed.

BY RON LAWSON

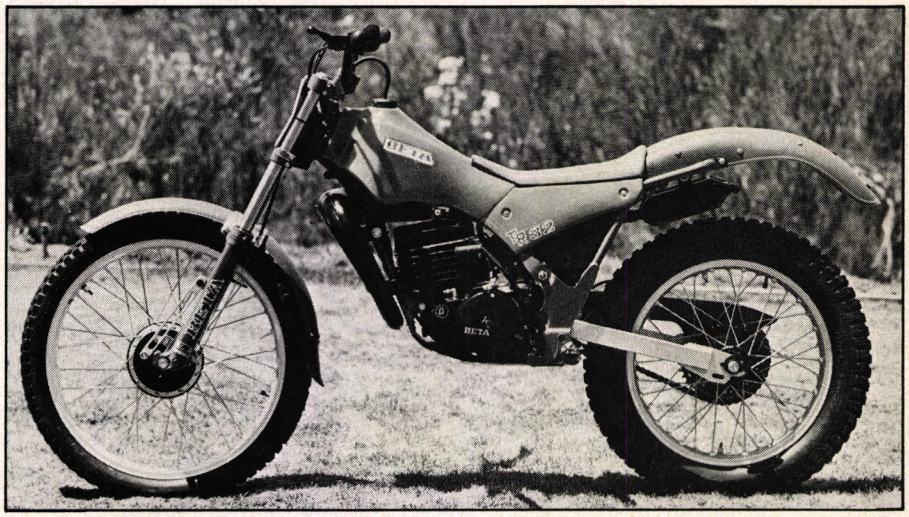
Time moves slowly when it comes to trials. And one reason for this is that there simply aren't enough trials riders to interest the big Japanese companies. So, Most of the burden of technological advance falls on Spanish and Italian firms.

Motobeta, an Italian company, has handled more than its share of that burden, and is offering Americans the most advanced European trials bike yet. The Beta TR32 is a 239cc single-shock machine that demonstrates new-age sophistication in several ways. For example, engineering a trials single-shocker presents certain design problems. A low seat height and ample ground clearance are high priorities, and that leaves little space for a centrally located shock. But not only did Beta find the room for a shock, the distance from seat to skid plate is even less than that of most other trials machines. The Marzocchi shock is located under the seat, and is connected to the aluminum swingarm via two steel links. At first, that shock seems stiffly sprung, but with time, it softens considerably. One disadvantage of the Beta's single-shock setup is that the TR32 has so much packed under the seat that not much air gets to the shock body, a condition that can lead to excessive shock heat and failure.

Another heat-related problem is evident after extended riding in slow sections. The Beta's engine tends to overheat and detonate; even when the motor starts pinging, though, the machine produces remarkable power. In fact, there are very few 350s that outperform the Beta in low-end. And even though the engine seems to have less flywheel and quicker throttle response than, say, a Bultaco 350, the Beta is reluctant to stall.

In handling, too, the Beta seems to combine the best of all worlds. It is as agile and quick-turning as any bike made, but it's also stable and holds a line remarkably well. What really sets the Beta apart from other Italian trials bikes, though, is the attention to detail. The Grimeca brakes are surprisingly strong, clutch operation requires only one finger, and the finish is outstanding.

Of course, quality in details and finish won't make sections any easier to clean. But excellence in categories like that usually is a Japanese trademark. And that's why the Beta is exceptional. The big companies might not need trials to survive, but from the looks of the Beta, trials doesn't need the big companies, either. ●



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

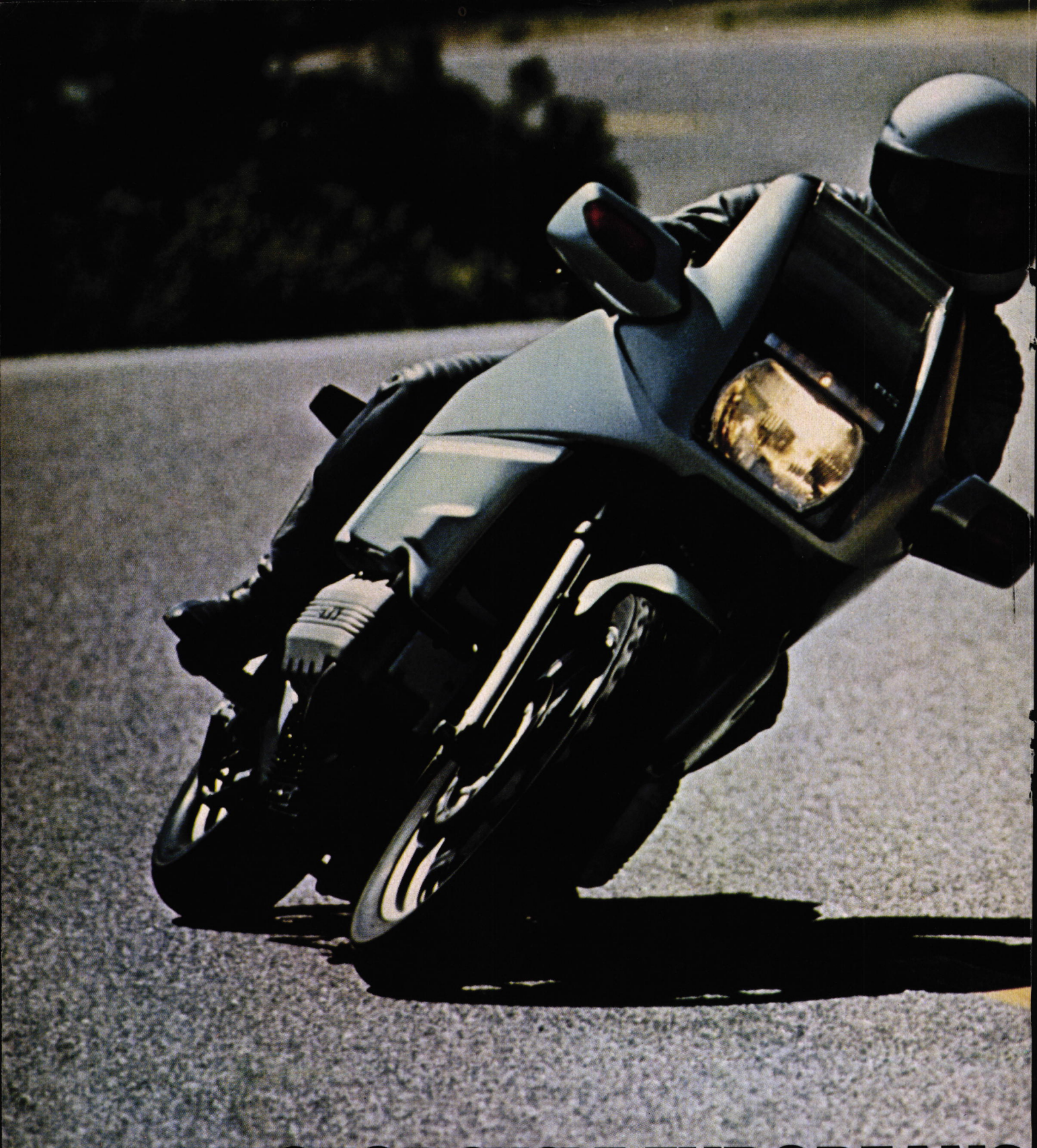
The Beta is a TR32 in name, a 239 in displacement and a 350 in horsepower

With its modern engine, the TR seems like a Japanese bike from Italy.

Beta TR32

Importer: Cherokee Cycle Center
Route 3, Castle Drive
Cleveland, Tennessee 37311

Category	trials
Suggested retail price	$2495 (plus shipping)
Engine type	two-stroke vertical single
Bore and stroke	72.8mm x 57.5mm
Displacement	239.3cc
Gearbox	6-speed
Wheelbase	51.5 in. (1308mm)
Seat height	30 in. (762mm)
Available color	red only



THE MOTORCYCLE EUROPEANS

Recently, an unusual advertisement appeared in Europe's best-selling motorcycle magazine.

It invited readers to test ride a revolutionary motorcycle called the K 100 RS, the first four-cylinder bike in BMW's history.

There was one catch, however. A rather expensive one.

The test ride would take place in Southern France. To take part, a rider would have to submit $200 to cover all travel costs—in advance.

The response? Within three days, over six hundred applications rolled in. By the end of the response period, in fact, BMW was flooded with so many requests that a lottery had to be established to decide who would go. There simply weren't enough accommodations to go around.

In short, no motorcycle in history had ever aroused so much curiosity. But then, consider the K 100 RS.

Its engine technology was derived from the in-line fours that have powered numerous

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PAID $200 JUST TO TEST RIDE.

BMW automobiles. Including the recent Formula One Champion race car.

Its integral fairing is so aerodynamically sound, the RS can reach top speeds other bikes need 20 to 30 more horsepower to achieve.

Its power band is so broad "I had to look at the gear indicator to find out what gear I was in" was an often-heard statement from test riders.

Its center of gravity is so low and its weight is so light (496 lbs.) that "directional changes (become) mere mentally inspired flicks," according to one reviewer.

Now the K 100 RS is available in America. And if we've managed to arouse your curiosity, there's an easy way to satisfy it.

You can take the RS out for a free ride at your participating dealer.

Not as glamorous a place to ride as the south of France perhaps. But considerably less expensive to get to.

THE LEGENDARY MOTORCYCLES OF GERMANY.

RIDING IMPRESSION:

Moto Guzzi Le Mans III

For sport riders whose search for apexes also leads them to simplicity.

BY STEVE THOMPSON

In an era when liquid-cooled vee-fours with four valves per cylinder approximate the sportbike norm, what is a rider to make of an anomaly, a boldly self-proclaimed sport motorcycle whose engine is derived from a three-wheeled all-terrain monstrosity nicknamed the "Mechanical Mule"? Worse, what is he to think when it turns out even *that* application came because the bike's OHV vee-twin failed as a minicar powerplant in the late Fifties? Can such a device add up to any kind of serious sportbike?

It can. When the name on the tank is "Moto Guzzi," and when the sidecovers say, "850 Le Mans III," such an oddball heritage *does* add up to a serious sport motorcycle, because the Mule's engine is married to a motorcycle that optimizes every trait the vee-twin possesses.

Consider some Le Mans III numbers: The factory claims this 844cc 90-degree pushrod vee-twin pumps out 73 bhp at its redline of 7700 rpm. Looking at the 36mm Dell'Orto pumper carbs and the intelligently designed intake and exhaust plumbing, even a skeptic would agree it's a reasonable claim.

Then consider the performance generated by that modest power output: The 850 will run a quarter-mile in under thirteen seconds, and, given a long enough straight, will see a top speed in excess of 130 mph at redline in fifth gear. And in doing so, the bike will get more than 35 mpg, with a typical figure of more than 45 mpg in normal street riding. The bike will steer rock-steady through just about any kind of corner *Continued*

PHOTOGRAPHY ©1984 WILLIAM A. FORD AND ART DAVIS

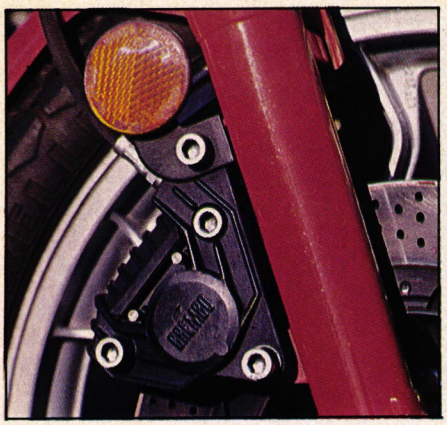
MOTO GUZZI

you can find, at lean angles steep enough to challenge most riders' nerves and skills. And because of the 850's Integral Braking System, almost any rider can extract maximum performance from the brakes as well as the engine. Not bad for a motorcycle that has seen only evolutionary, not revolutionary, changes since its debut as the 1971 750cc V7 Sport (See "Motos Como," page 48).

And the motorcycle's long history is no indicator of an antiquated suspension system: The 850's chassis rides on air-assisted suspension, front and rear. In front, the 35mm tubes of Moto Guzzi's own fork get help in holding up the Le Mans III's 454 pounds, by way of fork-top air bladders fed through a single valve on the right fork crown (with a 42-psi recommended maximum). In back, the oil-damped shocks offer a range of adjustment that includes both five-position spring preload cams and a maximum 56-psi air pressure. Not in the same class as a linkage-type single-shock setup, surely, but a tidy arrangement nonetheless.

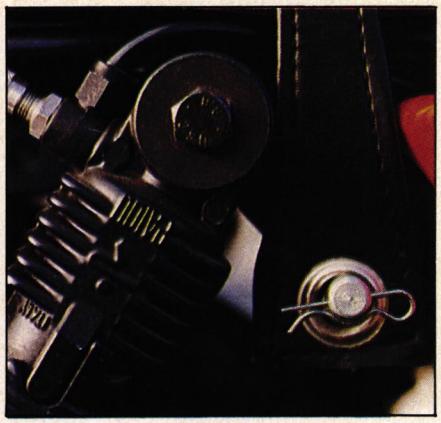
Stylistically, Alejandro De Tomaso raised the Le Mans to tidy status when he redesigned it for 1981. Previously, the Le Mans had a cobbled-up, semi-racer look, with matte-finished pipes and a quarter-fairing. The new Le Mans III fits right into the modern creased-edge styling idiom typified by just about any Japanese sportbike. The 850's ABS plastic quarter-fairing and "lowers" (actually, a set of strakes bolted to the cylinder heads) are claimed to have been developed in the Guzzi wind tunnel—another indication that the 850 has a place in the technology-intensive Eighties.

The motor itself, despite its Muleish beginnings, is hardly a direct lift from the Fifties, and has seen extensive refinement for its Le Mans application. Moto Guzzi proudly boasts that this bike is one of the first to meet the tough new European noise standards; and considering that the bike actually is faster than the previous Le Mans, such a feat *is* cause for boasting. Key elements in that achievement are: the Nigusil cylinder coating, which consists of a nickel-silicon surface that provides a hard cylinder lining claimed to promote better scavenging while dramatically lowering cylinder weight; new pistons that provide a 9.8:1 compression ratio; larger valves set at a different angle; and significantly better intake and exhaust breathing. The end result of those changes is an engine that lights off on the first crank of the electric starter with a little use of the crankcase-



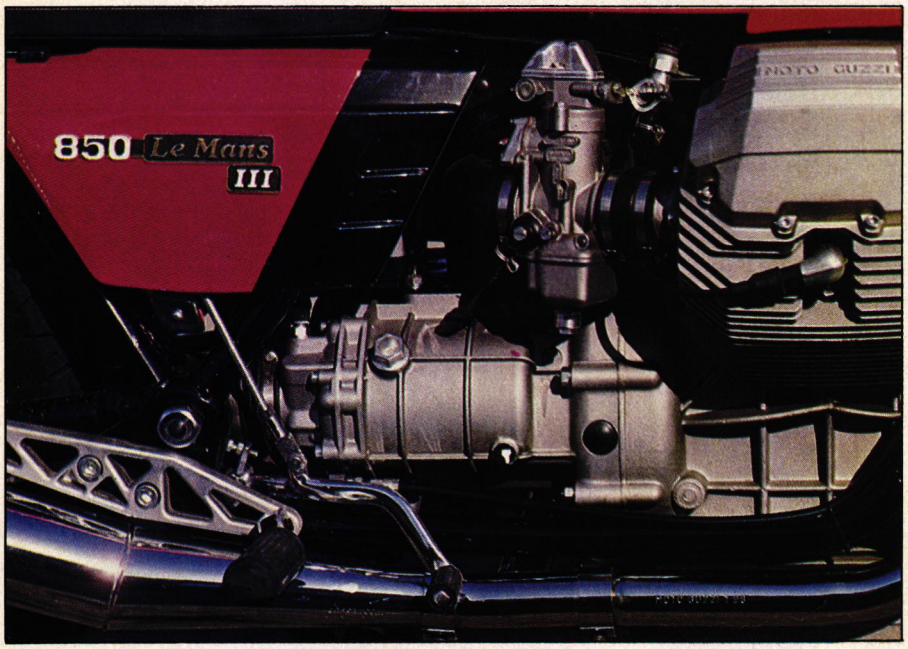
Integral brakes use Brembo calipers

Putting the squeeze on speed.



Le Mans' shocks are air-adjustable

And full-hard means just that.



844cc 90-degree OHV vee-twin kicks out a claimed 73 horses

Branded forever as the heart of the Mechanical Mule.

Le Mans III's bold styling extends to dash plate and controls

With an oversize tachometer holding center stage.

mounted enrichening lever, and which will take throttle happily within 30 seconds.

But having started the engine, a Le Mans rider easily can encounter something all too common with this bike: missed shifts, especially from second to third. Almost any issue of the Moto Guzzi National Owner's Club Newsletter provides a story or two from a Guzzi rider who has found a "fix" for this problem, which seems to occur on every Guzzi (except the V1000 Convert, equipped with a torque converter).

There are other peculiarities, as well, among them the 850's riding position. Although the clip-ons can be swiveled on the fork tubes, the footpegs are fixed, and in the first moments on the bike the big question is how to position oneself to avoid jamming knees into valve covers. Luckily, although the seat is typically Italian (Read: hard and narrow), it is well-configured for using body English, and allows easy sliding fore and aft. And as riding speeds increase, enough wind comes over the fairing's bubble to take the strain off wrists, and the riding position becomes more comfortable.

At slower speeds, the 850's steering strikes a neat balance between being neither too heavy nor too light, and stays mostly neutral right up to full power in the fastest sweeper. There is little hunting or weave at high speeds, even on the racetrack, and for most situations, using the adjustable hydraulic steering damper (pinned to the underside of the triple clamp and to the right side of the frame) isn't required. As much as the competence of the chassis, the engine's flexible power delivery is responsible for the 850's crisp handling, which is aided by good suspension and sticky tires.

You might not even think the Guzzi *had* suspension, though, if you immediately set it up full-hard. Because with the suspension jacked up to maximum levels, the Le Mans III rides like a buckboard. The slight increase in ground clearance gained by using maximum air pressures and preload is a poor trade-off for the discomfort and seemingly rigid rear end; running the No. 1 rear preload setting and one-half the recommended maximum air pressures front and rear proved to be the best compromise. The penalty of that compromise is slightly eroded ground clearance, a tendency for the bike to sink on its suspension under trailing or closed throttle, and distracting chassis-jacking under full-throttle shifts. And so, the 850 Le Mans has a required high-speed riding technique: set up for a cor-

Continued

ner early, avoid trailing or closed throttle and hang way off in every turn.

Assisting the 850's performance is what has to be one of the very best braking systems on any motorcycle. Three big Brembo calipers are actuated by the Guzzi Integral Braking System, which uses a proportioning valve to pinch both the rear and front left rotors when the brake pedal is depressed; and although mashing down on the brake pedal causes the fork to twist left slightly under hard use, when the front and rear brake controls are activated together this bike stops both predictably and *hard*.

Unfortunately, the stock Pirelli Phantoms were not such a success story. Although they stuck well, and gave wiggly notice before they began to slide, they seem too narrow for banzai riding. The bike reaches the limits of its tires before

Continued

Motos Como

• Because the same basic engine found in the Le Mans III has powered Moto Guzzis for 17 years, many riders consider the vee-twin design to be the marque's emblem, as symbolic as the eagle above the name "Moto Guzzi." Yet that vee-twin is symbolic mostly of a gamble that paid off, not of a commitment to the engine per se. To understand, you need to know how Moto Guzzi came to be part of the empire of Alejandro De Tomaso, an expatriate Argentine racer-cum-carmaker, rather than a modern version of the firm founded by Carlo Guzzi in 1921 at Mandello, near Lake Como in Italy.

Originally, Guzzi planned to join with two Italian Air Force pilots, Giorgio Parodi and Giovanni Ravelli, to create a new firm that would build a "rational" motorcycle, one that would emphasize function, not styling. But Ravelli died in a plane crash, and in his memory the firm adopted the IAF eagle as its logo. Despite the loss of one partner, however, Guzzi and Parodi carried on.

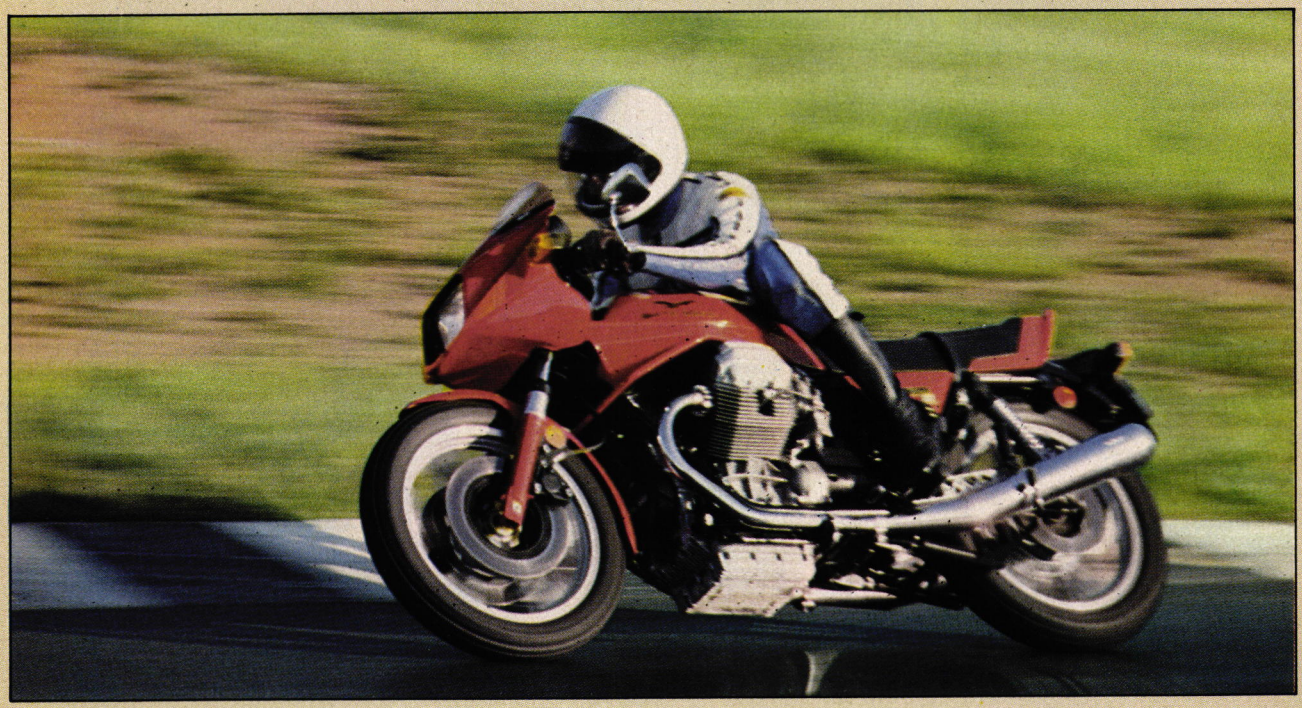
Moto Guzzi eventually prospered, by following the accepted path of winning races, then selling bikes based on those results. Guzzi's most significant prewar bike was the 1935 spring-frame "Bicilindrica" racer, which, in Stanley Woods' hands, won that year's Isle of Man Senior Tourist Trophy—the first time a non-British bike had done so. But Guzzi's heyday came in the Fifties, when the firm's research department included Giulio Cesare Carcano, designer of the most famous Moto Guzzi, the 500cc V8. This fully faired GP racer used a transversely mounted DOHC engine with eight carbs, and was producing 80 horsepower by the time the company withdrew from racing in 1957.

That withdrawal eventually led to the use of Carcano's other legacy to Guzzi, the vee-twin. By the late 1950s, Guzzi and other European manufacturers were losing sales because of the emergence of cheap, small cars. So, Guzzi attempted to use the vee-twin as a minicar engine, then inserted it into the "3-by-3," or Mechanical Mule, for the Italian Army in 1960. But in 1964, Carlo Guzzi died; two years later, Moto Guzzi went into receivership. A trustee company, SEIMM, administered Guzzi's assets, one of which was Carcano's vee-twin design. And in 1967, on the direction of SEIMM, the Mule engine was built into a bike intended for police use. Soon afterward, Lino Tonti became chief engineer at Guzzi, and he designed the now-famous V7 series of civilian bikes around a strong duplex cradle, mild-steel frame which, like the Carcano engine, survives in slightly altered form today in the Le Mans III.

SEIMM then began looking for a buyer for Guzzi, and in 1973 found Alejandro De Tomaso, an Argentine of Italian descent who had left bull ranching for car racing in his youth. He had already purchased a majority interest in Benelli, and subsequently bought Moto Guzzi. Along with Giorgetto Guigiaro, De Tomaso had designed two cars, the Mangusta and Pantera, and his influence was soon obvious in the increasingly sophisticated styling of both Benellis and Guzzis.

Today, Moto Guzzis are imported and distributed in the United States by Benelli/Moto Guzzi North America Inc., whose president, George A. Garbutt, says De Tomaso either directs or approves every move his factories—Maserati, Benelli and Moto Guzzi—make, in styling or engineering. Asked about where this direction might be taking Moto Guzzi, Garbutt smiled. "Anywhere De Tomaso wants to take it," he said.

—Steve Thompson



mō'tor•cy'cles

We don't expect you to buy our magazine because it has tips on gourmet dining. Nor because it tells you about the latest in jogging shoes. We expect you to like CYCLE GUIDE because it's the best-written, most thorough, most entertaining dose of high-intensity moto-info you can buy. A kind of monthly one-stop shopping center for all your motorcycle input, from new-model tests to inside tips, secrets of the sport, new ways to have fun with your bike and evaluations of the accessories made to help you have that fun.

Street & Dirt

Naturally, we don't confine our interest to one kind of motorcycling. For instance, we think there's nothing in all the world more fun than doing cross-ups with the spectacular MX machinery available today. Not to mention dodging trees and rocks in enduros. In fact, if it's something you can do with a motorcycle off-road, we're sure to do it.

Which doesn't mean, of course, that we don't work the other side of the trees. Whenever we can, we turn our lively and exhaustive street tests into staff rides, blitzing the twisties and eating up thousands of miles in touring. Because we love street motorcycles as much as dirt bikes.

Just like you.

Big & Small

Some people seem to think you can't have fun on anything that doesn't have a handful of cylinders and eyeball-squashing power. And some people think that God meant Man only to ride bikes with seven-speed gearboxes and a tea-cup-full of engine. We're not like either group. We can have fun testing and writing about anything with two wheels and a motor, from crypto-chopper to minibike. So our entire staff is totally conversant with the whole motorcycle spectrum, from tiddler to terror. And consequently, whatever your preferences in displacement and power, you'll find them within the pages of CYCLE GUIDE.

Because fun isn't measured in cubic inches.

Riding & Writing

Ours is a staff of expert riders. Qualified to ride or race almost anything. But it's not our ability to turn hot laps that makes us proud of our work. It's our ability to turn hot licks on the typewriter.

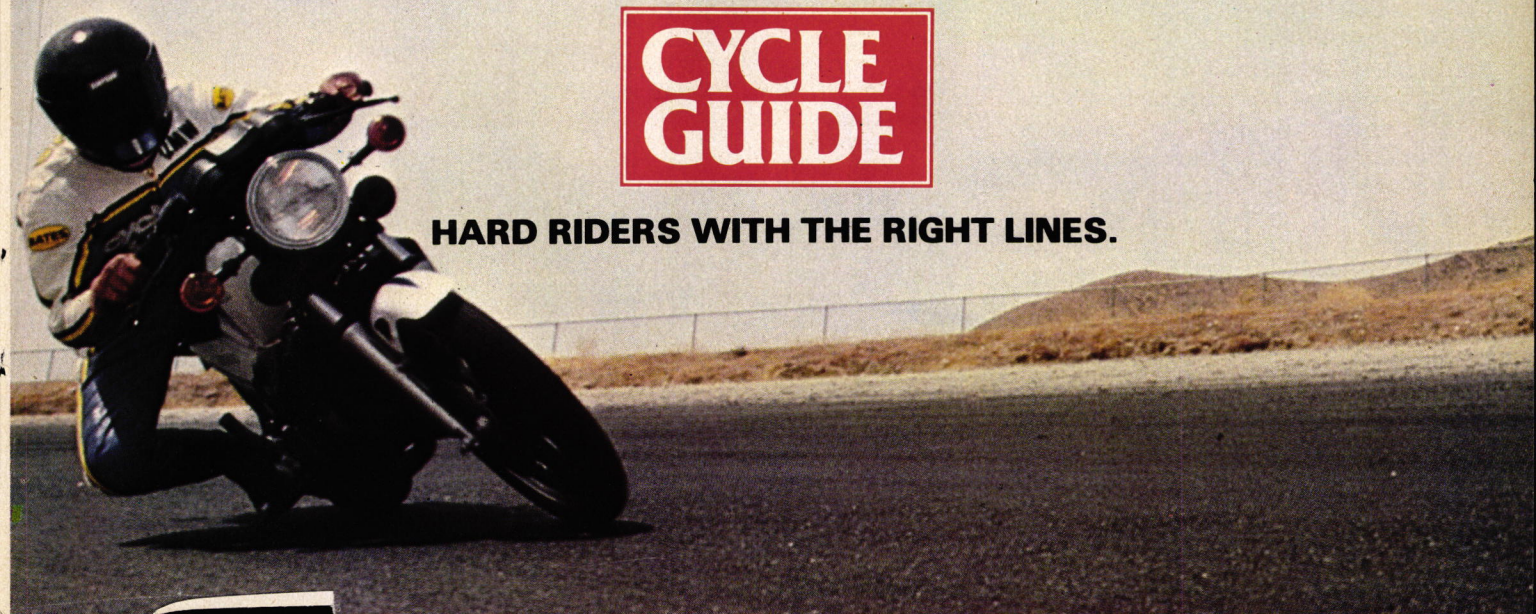
That's because while there are a lot of good riders around, there aren't many who can turn the experience of riding into something others can share and delight in. Or learn from. So we've been very selective about who writes for us, making sure that riding skill is matched by writing skill. The result isn't Shakespeare, but we think our ways of taking you along with us over the jumps, across the apexes and through the woods on two wheels are better than anyone's in the business.

Including Shakespeare.

Them & Us

There are a lot of motorcycle magazines on your newsstand. Some specialize in dirt bikes, some in street bikes, others in choppers. Some are very nice to flip through in idle moments. And like you, because we're full-on motorcyclists, we flip through them too, occasionally even finding something we like to read. But like you, we think there's a world of difference between an "occasional" magazine and one that delivers the kind of excitement, enjoyment and insight we'd feel good about spending our money on.

The occasional magazines are still in the rack. You're reading the one that we know delivers the goods every month.



CYCLE GUIDE

HARD RIDERS WITH THE RIGHT LINES.

undercarriage bits begin to touch down. Le Mans riders attempt to solve the problem by replacing the stock MT29 front Pirelli with an MT28 rear tire, and while this practice might work for the track (and might simultaneously eliminate the slight inward-falling sense that the stock front tire's profile seems to produce in tight corners), the slowed steering such a change would impart could be irritating on the street.

Up to the point at which the Phantoms run out of rubber, though, the Le Mans is stable, predictable and entirely pleasant to ride hard. The engine gets serious about power delivery above 5000 rpm, and runs out of steam around 7700. And the five-speed, close-ratio gearbox gives you plenty of opportunity to stay within that sweet zone of instant poke. Like most opposed-cylinder engines, the Guzzi's vee rocks side to side at low speeds when throttle is applied; while this undoubtedly would be disconcerting to someone weaned on silky-smooth Fours, it isn't really objectionable. At idle, the big vee's exhaust note is akin to that of a hyperthyroid lawnmower, but around five grand it becomes a growl, and by six it's a snarl. The sound is pleasant, not too loud and decidedly un-Japanese—and entirely in keeping with the character of the bike.

That character is best described as aggressively conservative. The Le Mans III sets no new standards in any area of performance—although its brakes are superb—and there are a half dozen bikes that can best it in each quantifiable measure of performance. The same holds true for sport-touring; the 850's ride is too harsh and the riding position too extreme for dominance in that class, which requires a higher comfort quotient than the Le Mans III can provide. As a result, some people think the bike's forte is simply in being "different"; but this is an unsatisfactory definition of either the Guzzi's achievements or its allure.

The 850's real achievement, and the reason why the sportbike cognoscenti should pay attention to it, is that the combination of a simple powertrain and a sound chassis has produced a fast, stylish motorcycle that, while admittedly not high-tech, can still generate performance beyond that which most riders can fully use. And its allure lies in the fact that all of these elements are understandable, even to the least technically sophisticated rider. In an era when the price of performance is increasing complexity, such traits are ever rarer, and not to be taken lightly.

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Moto Guzzi 850 Le Mans III — street

IMPORTER: Benelli/Moto Guzzi North America, 1501 Caton Ave., Baltimore, Maryland 21227

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $4518

ENGINE

Type	four-stroke 90-degree transverse vee-twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	83.0mm x 78.0mm
Displacement	844.2cc
Compression ratio	9.8:1
Engine redline	7700 rpm
Carburetion	two 36mm Dell'Orto slide/needle
Air filter	disposable paper element
Lubrication	wet sump
Starting system	electric only
Ignition	battery/dual points/dual coils
Charging system	12-volt; 280-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 20-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive	helical gears; 1.235:1 ratio
Clutch	dry, multi-plate
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive	spiral-bevel gears; 4.714:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.000	11.644	N/A
II	1.389	8.086	N/A
III	1.048	6.101	N/A
IV	0.870	5.065	N/A
V	0.750	4.366	N/A

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front	Paioli air-spring, 35mm stanchion tube diameter/5.9 in. (149mm)
Rear	dual Paioli air-spring shocks, five-way adjustable spring preload/3.1 in. (80mm)

BRAKES

Front	dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 11.8-in. (300mm) disc diameter
Rear	double-action hydraulic caliper, 9.5-in. (242mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front	100/90H18 Pirelli MT29 tubeless
Rear	110/90H18 Pirelli MT28 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight	454 lbs. (206.0kg)
Weight distribution	N/A
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)	920 lbs. (417kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank)	427 lbs. (194kg)
Wheelbase	59.3 in. (1505mm)
Seat height	N/A
Handlebar width	N/A
Footpeg height	N/A
Ground clearance	6.9 in. (175mm)
Steering head angle	28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	N/A
Frame	tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity	3.3 qt. (3.0l)
Fuel tank	steel, 6.2 gal. (25.0l)
Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, voltmeter

WARRANTY: 12 months,unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: red or white

All specifications and performance data are the manufacturer's claims, not information compiled by the CYCLE GUIDE staff.

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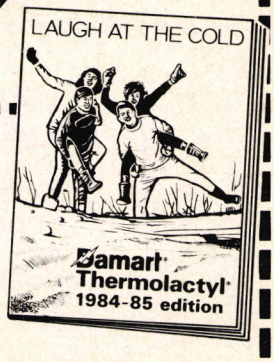

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

RAT Disposable Air Filter Elements

A new idea at your disposal.

• Servicing an air filter is the dirt rider's equivalent to cleaning diapers. No one could possibly enjoy the chore, but it's mandatory. In fact, cleaning the filter is the most frequently performed act of dirtbike maintenance—motocross bikes in particular require a clean air filter every time they hit the track.

So it was inevitable that someone would come up with disposable air-filter elements. And that someone is RAT Racing. RAT sells a package of four elements for $12.95. That's roughly the price of a single stock filter element, which, according to Kawasaki, for example, should be replaced after only five uses.

We used the RAT elements in a 1984 Honda CR125, which uses the same element as the '83 CR. The RAT unit, like the stock filter, is a single-stage element. But the disposable filter's foam is denser than the stocker's, or even that of most dual-stage filters. That extra restriction might create jetting problems with some bikes, but we had no trouble with the CR. We did, however, have trouble with the elements themselves. They're made of extremely delicate material, and just installing them on the air-filter cage can tear the element's base. Once you do get the element on the cage, you'll find there isn't much filter material to seat against the airbox, so huge amounts of grease are necessary to provide a good seal and prevent dirt from bypassing the filter.

Far greater concern was generated after one day of riding the CR in moderately dusty conditions. We checked the filter after the ride, and found it was almost entirely clogged. Because of its dense foam, the RAT element traps most of the dirt on its surface, and so holds less dirt than the average dual-stage filter. And once the surface area of the filter is covered with dust, air flow almost stops.

So even though servicing the RAT filter is easier, the filter has to be serviced more often. And when you consider that most stock filters will outlast the manufacturer's five-use recommendation, there seems little reason to use the RAT elements when something as critical as your engine's life span is concerned. After all, the disposable motor has yet to be invented. For more information, contact RAT Racing, 6294 Anderson Road, Forestville, California 95436; (707) 887-7776. *—Ron Lawson*

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For $12.95, RAT gives you four disposable filter elements and plastic gloves

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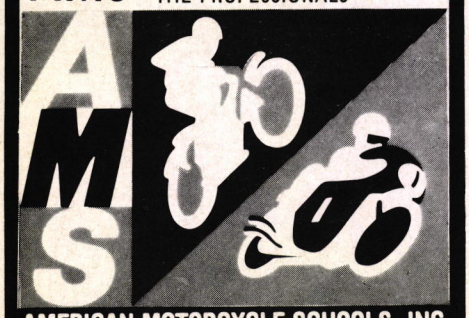

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Pulse Stop

Brake out the flashers.

• Most modern motorcycles have excellent brakes, which can be a great source of confidence when you're forced to execute a panic stop. But what about the driver behind you, who might not notice the bike's brake light—or how hard you're stopping? How do you keep from becoming his hood ornament?

Anything that helps a driver see you is good insurance. But short of fitting 500-watt taillight bulbs, you could install the Pulse Stop flasher system, which converts your bike's rear turnsignals into both running lights and pulsing brake lights; an automatic cutout disengages the running lights when either the turnsignals or flashing system are activated. And with the flashing system activated, the harder you stop, the faster the pulsing, within a range of 2-5 cycles per second. The compact, epoxy-sealed, 9½-ounce electronic unit features an adjustment that allows you to vary the brightness level of the running lights, and is designed for all 12-volt, negative-ground systems.

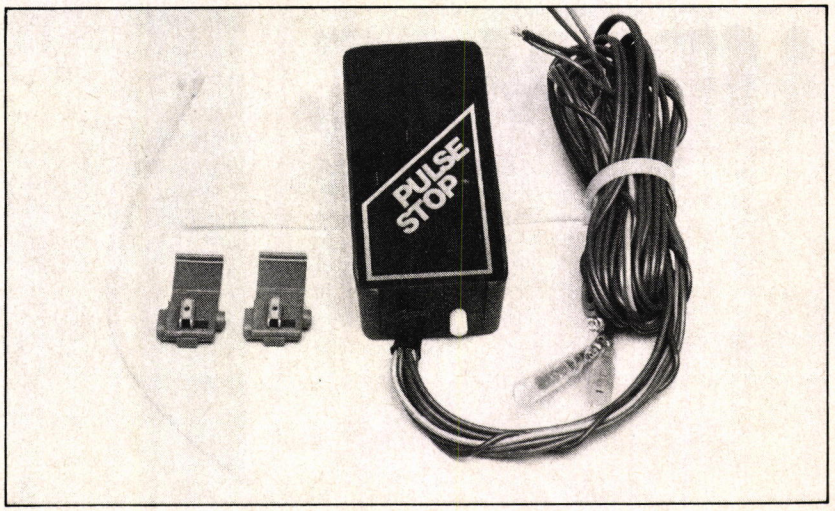
The Pulse Stop's black box splices easily into a bike's lighting system. The instructions and diagrams are clear and comprehensive, and tie-wraps are included to secure the unit. Also, 3-M In-Line Splice Connectors are provided to wire the Pulse Stop into the brake light and taillight. On our GPz550 test bike, the black box fit nicely beside the toolkit in the tailsection. The bullet connectors didn't match those on the Kawasaki's turnsignal leads, but the connectors were easily replaced.

It took about 15 minutes to install the Pulse Stop, after which we set the intensity adjuster so that the running lights' brightness matched the taillight's. The black box must be level and label-side up, with the wires aimed toward the taillight in order to achieve a rising flashing-rate; positioning the box any other way will net a fixed flashing rate. The kit includes two sheets of transparent red Mylar to fit inside the lenses, since some states don't allow the use of amber running lights. Or, if you wish, you can forgo the running-light feature and just hook up the brake flashers. We preferred using the running lights/flasher mode, though, because the larger pattern of illumination was more visible.

The manufacturer claims the Pulse Stop's running-light feature increases a bike's visibility from the rear by more than 200 percent, compared to the stock taillight alone. We couldn't quantify the increase, but the Kawasaki's rear end *was* noticeably brighter. Moreover, the braking pulsations were distinct, and the rising flashing-rate *seems* like it ought to alert following drivers that the bike in front of them is braking.

Pulse Stop sells for $64.95, which is cheaper—and to our way of thinking—better than a hardware store full of 500-watt taillight bulbs. The system comes with a one-year warranty, and is available at motorcycle dealerships or through Advanced Products Marketing Corp., 22732 Modesto Drive, Mission Viejo, California 92691; (714)855-4426.

—T.J. Rafferty



Black-box circuitry transforms turnsignals into running lights and pulsing brake lights

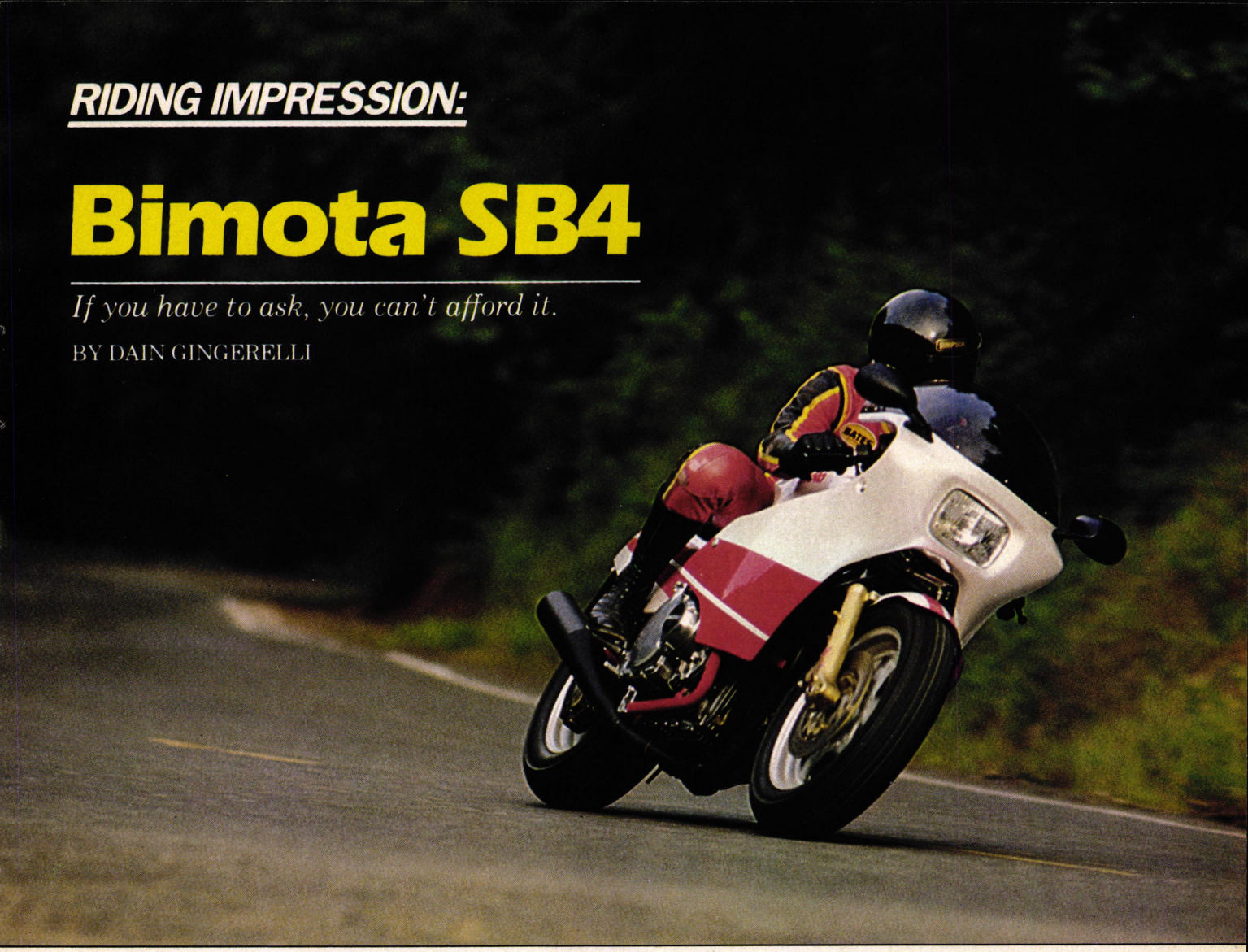
So you can be seen and not hurt.

RIDING IMPRESSION:

Bimota SB4

If you have to ask, you can't afford it.

BY DAIN GINGERELLI



Close your eyes, and think for a moment about the kind of sportbike you could build if cost were no object. It would be something on the lines of a bona fide roadracer, no doubt; a bike that could carve its initials into a turn's apex, or hold a steady line through a 120-mph sweeper as if it had Velcro-treaded tires. A bike, perhaps, like the Bimota SB4.

As you might guess from the "S" in its model designation, the SB4 utilizes a Suzuki engine, in this case the GS1100. And like every Bimota before it that has rolled out of the Adriatic seacoast village of Rimini, Italy, the SB4 is a sculpted work of moto-art. Every piece of hardware on it appears handmade, intended for one purpose only: to take its rider as quickly as possible along any twisty piece of road. You see, Bimotas thrive on sewing together one turn after another, weaving a quilt of apexes that forms a comforter for a die-hard sporting rider.

Sport riding of the SB4's sort puts a premium on handling, with rider comfort a distant second. It's a philosophy that stems from the racetrack, where the final goal is to deliver good lap times. And because Bimota adapts its racebike technology to its street models, the SB4 is more or less a racer with lights, horns and mirrors. Beyond those items, there is little that identifies the SB4 with any ordinary streetbike.

The SB4's most distinguishing feature is its frame, an impressively built structure of chromoly steel tubing that helps give the bike its remarkable handling manners. And every piece has a purpose, too; there are no extraneous brackets or tabs. For instance, the headlight bracket also is part of the frame's main backbone member. Surrounding the bright red frame is a single-piece fiberglass/Kevlar body panel that's finished in red and pearl white. And when the matching fairing is mounted, the Bimota announces its identity clearly; it's a racer decked out in street garb.

After spending a few miles in the Bimota's saddle, you begin to understand why it looks so much like a racer: It behaves like one, too. Flicking the SB4 into a turn is more a thought process than a physical exertion. The SB4 responds more like a middleweight sportbike than the 500-pound literbike it really is.

While the SB4 adapts well to high-speed canyon racing, it's not particularly comfortable to ride around town. The seating position lowers you into a roadracing crouch, and your arms stretch forward to reach the clip-on handlebars, forcing you into a near-prone position. The ergonomics are fine for high-speed cornering, but for sub-55-mph pottering, you find yourself appreciating the occasional stoplight, if only so you can unravel your body to let the blood circulate through your arms and legs. Because of its no-compromise seating position, the SB4's comfort factor is one apex short of awful. Consequently, a Bimota rider learns to handle low speeds with his left arm draped over the 5.8-gallon gas tank, supporting his weight while the stiff suspension pounds at him over expansion joints and other paving irregularities.

But judging the Bimota under everyday street conditions is hardly the point. After all, this is a single-purpose sport-

Continued

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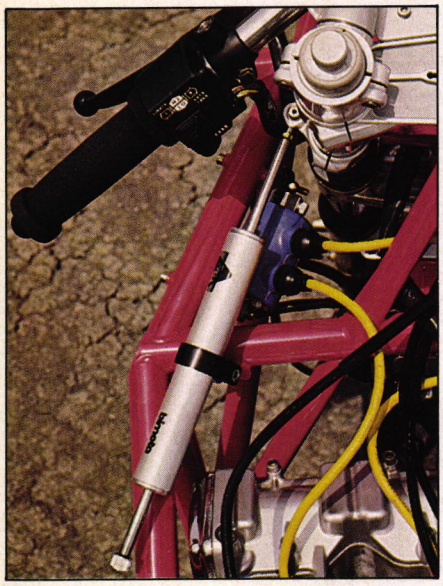
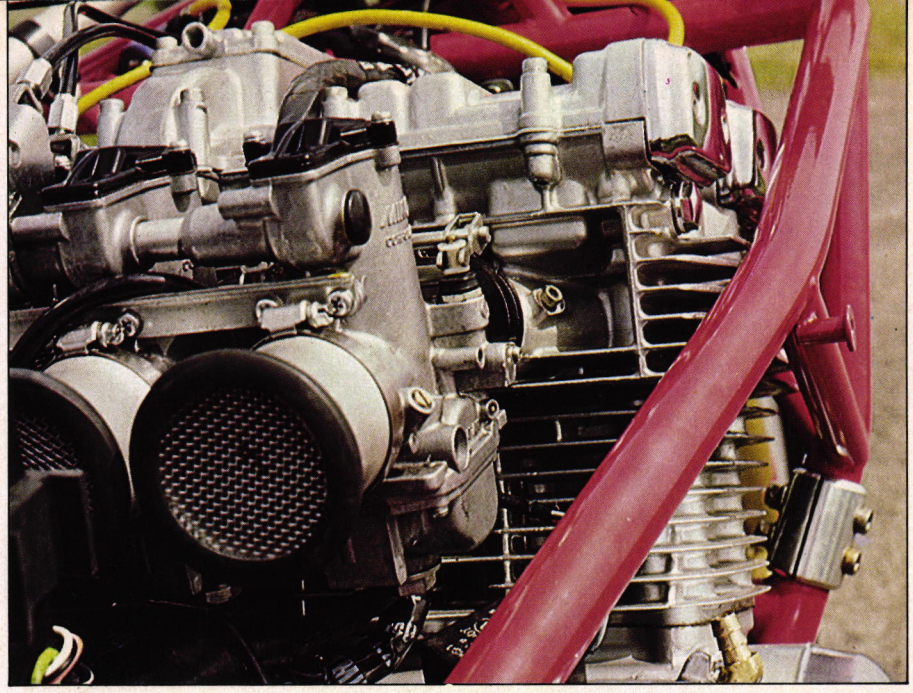


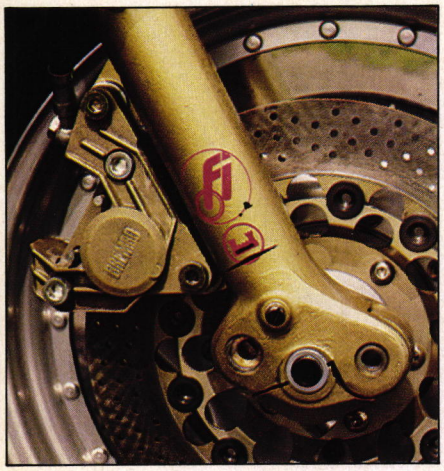
Bimota supplies the steering damper

Another way to get it straight.



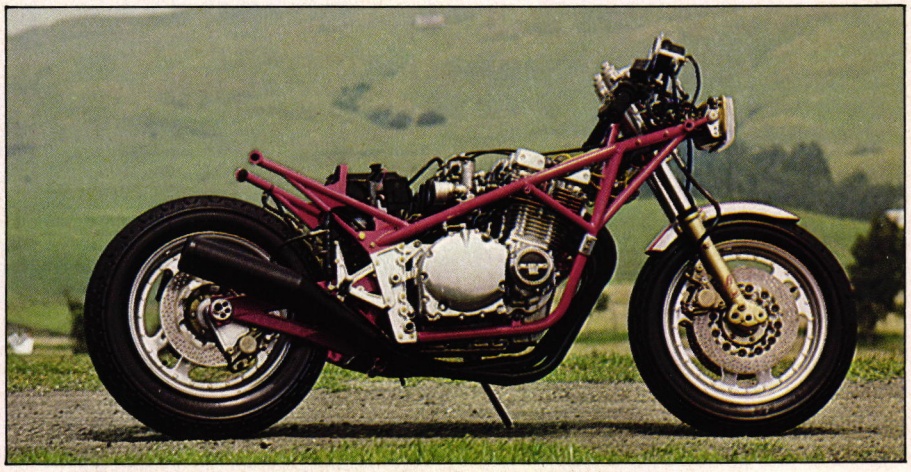
A quartet of 33mm smoothbore Mikunis feed the blueprinted Suzuki GS1100EZ engine

Making sure that only the best gets into the handbuilt motor.



Brembos stop the SB4 on a dime

But don't expect any change.



Stripped of its battle colors, the Suzuki-powered Bimota looks like a racer.

But more than looking like a racer, it behaves like one, too.

$18,000 Worth of Speed

• The rider, a man used to racing his $10,000 Yamaha TZ750 every Sunday, strolled over to our pits at Sears Point Raceway. Without lifting his gaze from the Bimota, he asked, "Does it feel like $18,000 between your legs?" Suddenly, I realized that what I had been riding only minutes before was no ordinary sportbike.

Eighteen thousand dollars; a lot of money for a motorcycle that offers few of the amenities most other top-line streetbikes do these days. While the Bimota rolling chassis alone costs $9500, the remainder of the expense footed for our test bike by Bruce Chasser and Bart Chicarelli was sealed tightly in the GS1100EZ engine cases. Chasser and Chicarelli obtained the first SB4 in this country in 1982, and decided to make it a cut above an ordinary Bimota by blueprinting the engine. In the process, they nearly doubled the bike's value.

"The entire engine has been rebuilt by Bart Chicarelli and me," explained Chasser. "We had the engine apart so many times, we can now put it together blindfolded if we have to." The odyssey through the engine began at American Cycle, in Peekskill, New York, where most of the high-performance parts were purchased, including big-bore Wiseco aluminum pistons that provide an 11:1 compression ratio, a Barnett clutch, Andrews coils, Manley stainless steel valves and 33mm Mikuni smoothbore carburetors. No expense was spared, and the result was an $8500 pricetag (including $3000 for the stock GS1100EZ bike) for the motor alone.

Money was only the tip of the iceberg, though; Chasser and Chicarelli spent hours balancing and blueprinting the engine. And to make sure the 1260cc engine breathed freely, Kenny Augustine, who ports cylinder heads for American Honda's roadrace team, reshaped the Suzuki's intake and exhaust ports.

Chasser claims that the work was worth it, because the result is a sportbike that does justice to the Bimota name. Like it said on the wooden crate that the SB4 was delivered in, "Vino D'Uvo Bene!"—wine of the good grapes. And like good wine, it took careful aging to make this SB4 what it is.

—Dain Gingerelli

bike. For that reason, the SB4's road manners can only really be judged in the twisties, where the bike is intended to be ridden. And there, you understand why the people in Rimini put an Italio (formerly Ceriani) fork with 40mm stanchion tubes up front, and a hefty rectangular aluminum swingarm on the rear. And that Italio unit, along with a deCarbon shock/spring that was originally designed for Formula One racecars, never let the bike pitch or wallow.

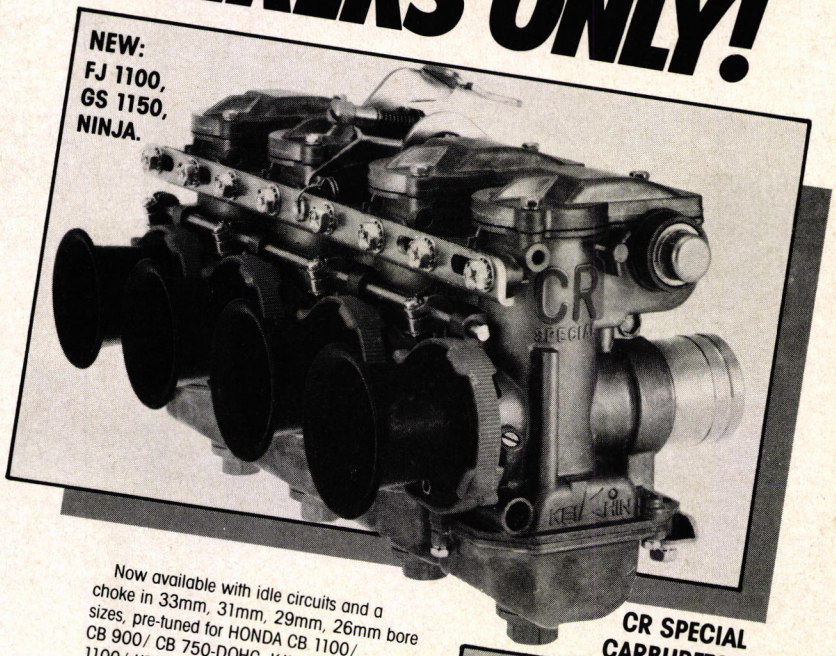
To find out just how good the SB4 is for flat-out riding, we took our test bike to Sears Point Raceway in northern California. Sears Point is a 2.75-mile track dotted with bumps and camber changes in its 11 turns, and is considered one of the best racetracks in America for evaluating suspension and handling performance. And after only a few laps we confirmed what Bimota owners have been saying for years: The SB4—like other Bimotas—is as much at home on a racetrack as it is on any twisty backroad.

Part of the SB4's cornering prowess can be traced to its low center of gravity and 16-inch wheels. It takes minimal body movement to set the SB4 into its cornering attitude, and once leaned over, the bike just hangs at the prescribed lean angle, as if suspended by wires. Plus, bumps and other paving irregularities fail to disturb the Bimota's composure during high-speed runs.

Sears Point brought out another of the SB4's virtues: braking. A pair of Brembo Gold Seal calipers up front (working on 11-inch rotors), and a single unit at the rear, combine with the race-compound Michelin tires to stop the Bimota quickly. And the built-up 1260cc high-compression engine (see "$18,000 Worth of Speed," page 58) provided plenty of engine-braking. As a result, slowing the SB4 from speed requires only closing the throttle, while coming to quick, sure stops takes a steady squeeze of the front brake lever to actuate the Brembos.

Racetrack testing brought home another point, too. It's the completeness of the Bimota's package—the brakes, engine, chassis and even the styling—and its performance at speed that make the SB4 one of the finest sportbikes in the world. This isn't everyman's bike for everyday riding, but not many people would want to use such a bike as a daily beater, either. One thing is for certain, though: If you can afford the Bimota brand of sportbiking excellence, you don't have to close your eyes and wish. Just place your order, and fill in the zeros on the check. •

KEIHIN 4 THRILL SEEKERS ONLY!



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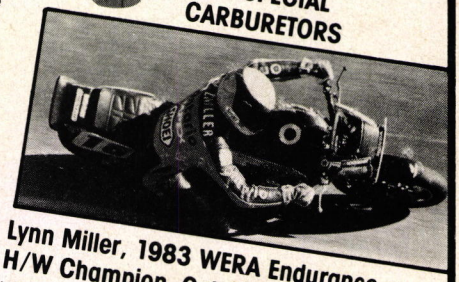

Lynn Miller, 1983 WERA Endurance H/W Champion, Ontario's CB 1125.

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A public safety message from the Safety Helmet Council of America

SAFETY HELMET COUNCIL OF AMERICA SHCA

RIDING IMPRESSION:

Honda CBX750

Hot-rod heart, Maytag maintenance.

BY CHARLES EVERITT

Picture a 750-class sportbike that can equal Honda's much-vaunted VF750F Interceptor turn-for-turn in handling, and match it in top-end acceleration. And, just to sweeten the deal, imagine that this near-miracle on wheels is powered by an air-cooled, transverse inline-four that, like Honda's CB700S Nighthawk, requires little more in the way of tuneups than a Lawnboy.

You don't have to conjure up such a motorcycle; it already exists. It's Honda's CBX750, a blend of Interceptor and Nighthawk attributes combined to form an exceptional high-performance/low-maintenance motorcycle. But there's also a catch built into this little beauty: Honda doesn't sell the CBX in the U.S.; it would compete directly with the VF750F for sales. Such intramural competition is acceptable in Europe, apparently, where both the CBX and the 750 Interceptor are sold, and each is expected to carve out its own niche.

And part of the CBX750's appeal stems from its engine and style of power delivery. Some riders aren't comfortable with either the complexity of a liquid-cooled vee-four, or a broad, featureless powerband. They prefer the familiarity of an air-cooled inline-four and a peakier style of power delivery, precisely what the CBX offers. The CBX feels a bit soft on the bottom end and through the midrange, but once the tach needle brushes 7000 rpm, the motor comes to life with a fierce rush of acceleration that continues up to the 10,000-rpm redline. An Interceptor's broader spread of power might be easier to use, but the CBX's style of power is more thrilling.

In fact, the CBX's powerband is strongly reminiscent of the CB700S Nighthawk's, which shouldn't be too surprising because, from the base gaskets

HONDA CBX750

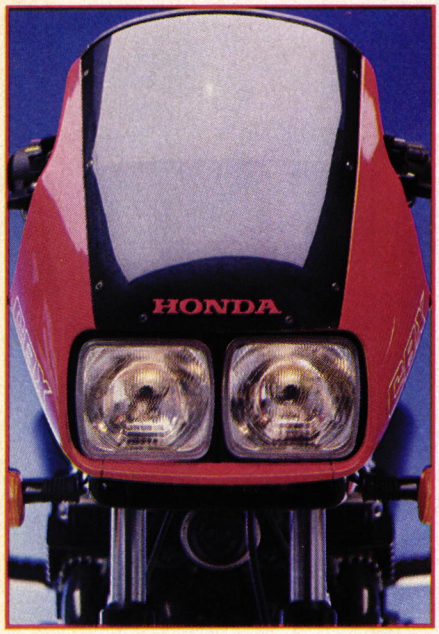
Manufacturer: Honda Motor Co. Ltd.
27-8,6-chome Jingu-mae
Shibuya-ku, 150 Japan

Category	street
Suggested retail price	N/A
Engine type	four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	67.0mm x 53.0mm
Displacement	747.4cc
Compression ratio	9.3:1
Carburetion	four 31mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Gearbox	6-speed
Front fork	Showa air-spring, 39mm stanchion tube diameter, 3-position adjustable rebound damping, brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive
Rear shock	single Showa air-spring shock, 3-position adjustable rebound damping
Wheelbase	57.7 in. (1465mm)
Weight	481 lbs. (218.0kg)
Steering head angle	27 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	3.7 in. (93mm)

All specifications are the manufacturer's claims, not information compiled by the CYCLE GUIDE staff.

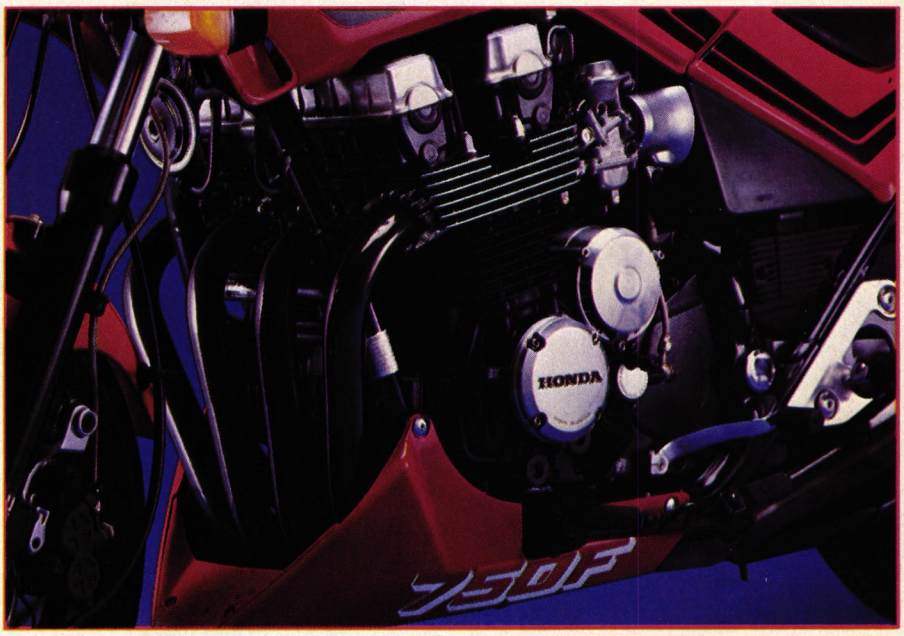
Honda's other sporting 750 offers a near-irresistable combination

Comfort, speed, excellent handling—and a familiar engine configuration.



CBX gets dual-headlight treatment

For the endurance-racer look.



Engine has the look, feel and convenience features of Honda's CB700 Nighthawk

And more claimed horsepower than either the 700 or a VF750F Interceptor.

up, the two are virtually identical, up to and including valve sizes, cam timing and Honda's innovative hydraulic valve-lash adjusters. Below the cylinders, though, the similarities begin to fade. For openers, the CBX's crank provides a 3.6mm-longer stroke than the 700's, bringing displacement up to 747cc. Plus, the CBX motor has different gear ratios, a one-way overrun clutch (like the VF750F's) and, more important, chain final drive in place of the 700's shaft drive.

In backroad expertise, though, the CBX stands on its own merits, and gives nothing away to the Nighthawk, VF750F or any other 750-class sporter. The CBX responds quickly and precisely to steering inputs, but without the Interceptor's hyperactive quickness. Indeed, some riders might find the VF almost too willing to turn into a corner, whereas the CBX feels steadier and calmer. And as an extra benefit, the CBX is less sensitive to bumpy corners than the VF. In short, less experienced riders might find the CBX's chassis easier to deal with, and prefer it over the VF750F.

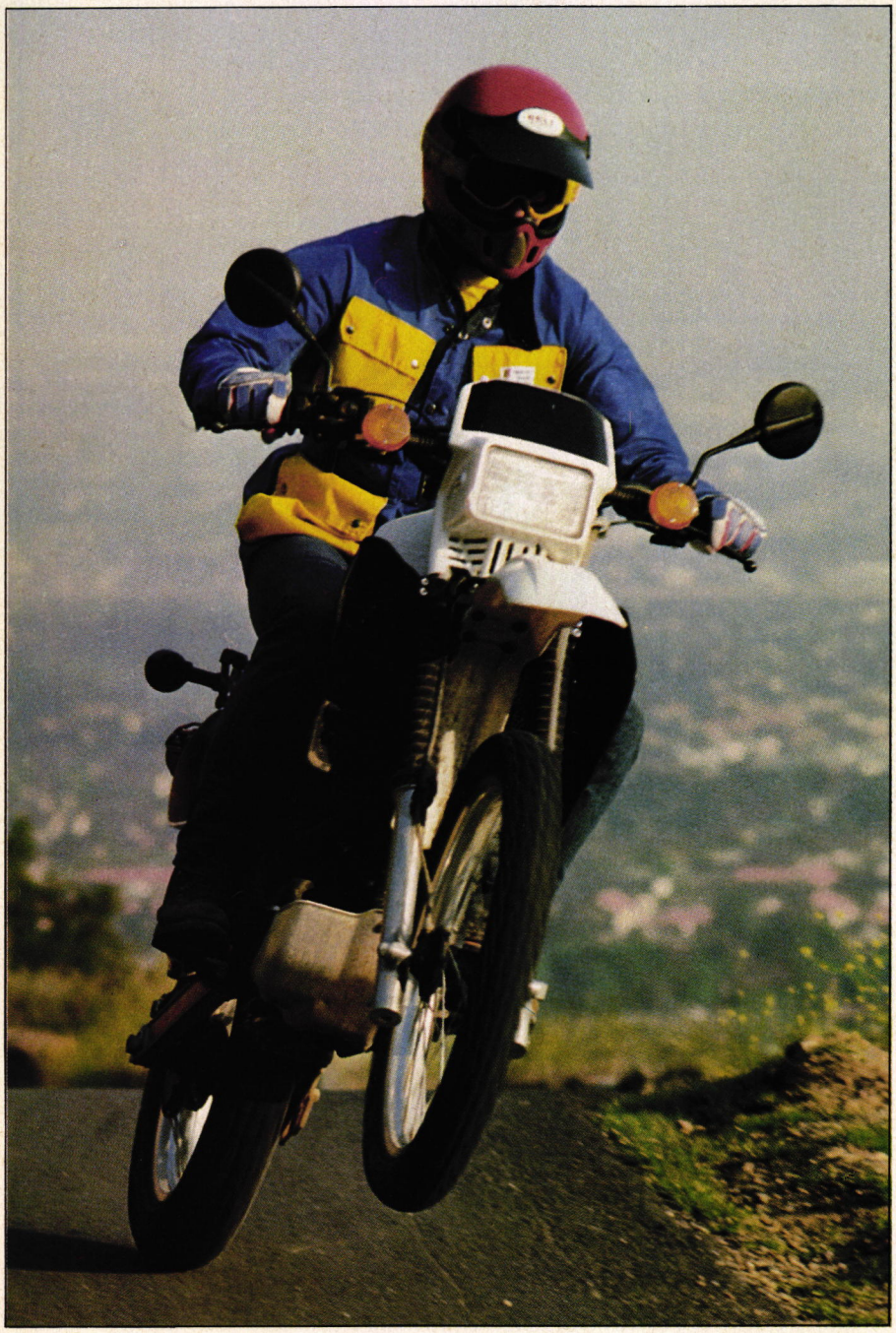
But almost any rider could appreciate the CBX's superb ergonomics. The bike's seating position distributes the pilot's weight evenly through his wrists, legs and backside for exceptional long-term comfort. Likewise, any rider could learn to love the CBX's almost appliance-like disdain for tuneups. Valve adjustment, cam-chain tension and ignition timing all are taken care of automatically; only sparkplugs, filters and oil require any attention or replacement. That kind of fiddle-free nature, combined with class-leading power, handling and ergonomics, would make the CBX750 just as attractive to Yankees as to Europeans. The bike exists; you don't have to imagine it...all you have to do is imagine it *here*.

DUAL-PURPOSE TEST:

Kawasaki KLR600

Applying today's technology to yesterday's market.

BY RON LAWSON



Investing in the future of dual-purpose bikes holds all the promise of buying a beach resort in the Rockies. It'd take a major shake-up to make that kind of speculation pay off—and Kawasaki knows it. But the company has its beach umbrellas and bellyboards set up anyway, because the KLR600 is expected to make the very bedrock of dual-purpose motorcycling tremble.

Of course, the KLR has a tremendous task in front of it. America's interest in street/dirt machinery has pretty much gone the same way as its infatuation with pet rocks. Dual-purpose bikes once were the mainstay of American motorcycling, but their numbers gradually decreased until the multi-use machine all but disappeared in a sea of highly specialized, narrow-focus bikes. Today, when streetbikes are subdivided into touring, sport, sport-

touring and any other category the imagination can devise, and dirtbikes are categorized as enduro, MX and trail bikes, there seems little hope for a machine designed to straddle *all* those categories.

Technology, Kawasaki figures, is the answer. The KLR600 has been filled to the limit with technology from the '80s in hope of resurrecting this market of the '70s. Virtually every four-stroke trick, whether new or old, has found its way onto the KLR. For example, the KLR marks Kawasaki's first four-valve single. But using four valves wasn't simply trickery for the sake of tricks. The use of four valves allows more efficient filling and emptying of the combustion chamber at high rpm, results in lighter valves that are less likely to float, permits a shallower combustion chamber and therefore is less prone to detonation. The KLR also is one of a small minority of double-overhead-cam singles; currently Yamaha's XT250 is the only other one available. No rocker arms are used on the machine; the cam lobes actuate the valves directly.

There's nothing really new about four-valve heads or double-overhead cams, though, even in the dual-purpose market. But the KLR's high-tech approach doesn't stop there. This also is the only liquid-cooled dual-purpose bike imported to this country. A water pump pushes the KLR's coolant through two interconnected aluminum radiators. There's even a small fan behind the right radiator. The fan comes on when the the temperature of that coolant rises above 200 degrees. Carburetion, too, is handled by the latest in Eighties-think. The KLR uses a flat-slide Mikuni with a special enrichner circuit that flows fuel when venturi pressure is low (any time the throttle is closed at high rpm), thereby reducing the lean backfires common to big thumpers.

Kawasaki extended its technology-can-cure-anything attitude to deal with other traditional four-stroke afflictions, too. In order to deal with the vibration generated by big singles, Kawasaki resorted to a double counterbalancer system. A single Hy-Vo-type chain drives two shafts at crankshaft speed. One shaft is at the front of the engine, and has two crescent-shape weights, while the other shaft has one weight and is located behind the crank. All three counterweights work together like a single, larger counterweight. Kawasaki deemed it easier to locate two small balancer shafts instead of one large one simply for space considerations. The system is effective, too. The

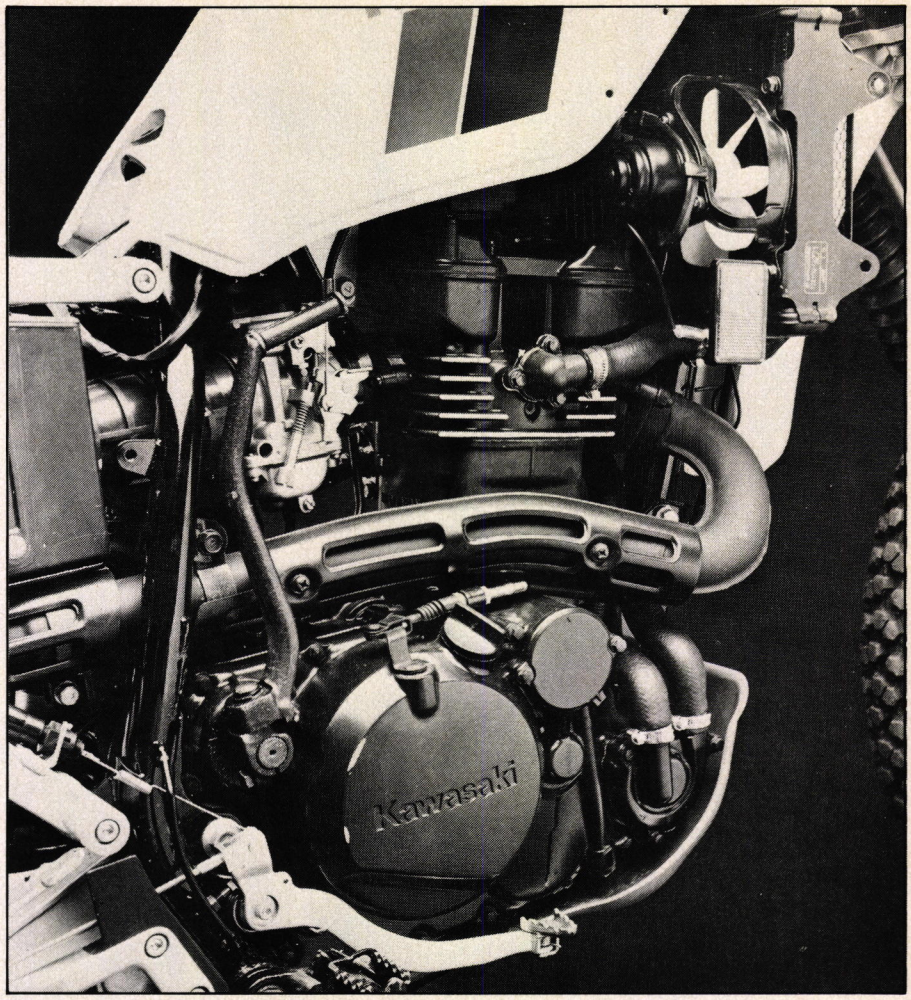
Continued

KLR600 engine is the smoothest single of its displacement ever made. By dirtbike standards, the Kawasaki is almost vibration-free. And on the highway, vibration becomes noticeable only above 6000 rpm. That means you can cruise all day at speeds approaching 70 mph without suffering numbfinger.

Unfortunately, the attempt to make the KLR easier to start than the typical thumper wasn't as successful. The bike incorporates the Kawasaki Automatic Compression Release (KACR). This device on the forward cam holds one exhaust valve slightly open until the engine begins rotating more than 1000 rpm. Essentially, that means any time the engine isn't running, the valve is open, and so kickstarting should be easy. It also means the KLR must have its idle set at an unusually high rpm. And despite KACR, the 600 ranks as one of the most difficult-starting bikes to bruise CYCLE GUIDE's editorial arches in years. This isn't a motorcycle that you just kickstart and go. Making the Kawasaki motor run requires rigid adherence to a certain procedure. First, you put the kickstand down and stand up on the pegs. Then you slowly depress the kickstart lever past the point of most resistance, lift your foot all the way up again, and kick like a mule. Sometimes the KLR likes a little choke or a little gas; sometimes it doesn't. This isn't terribly different from the start procedure of most four-strokes, but the KLR requires an extremely hard kick. KACR is sound in principle, but a manual compression release would be a welcome addition.

Once the KLR engine finally coughs its way to life, another shortcoming makes itself clear. The Kawasaki isn't particularly powerful. Despite all its trickery, the KLR ranks as just about the slowest-accelerating Japanese 600 you can buy. Honda's XL600 has considerably more power, and although we haven't tested the Yamaha XT600, we know that the XT550 of two years ago was at least a match for this year's Kawasaki. That seems less important, though, when you consider the nature of the Kawasaki's power. The KLR's powerband is smooth, with no flat spots or sudden rushes, and the bike has no trouble passing cars on the freeway or getting up to speed on a fireroad. The power starts coming on low, at about 2000 rpm. Then the KLR gradually climbs all the way up to the machine's 8000-rpm redline.

On the street, no amount of smoothness can cover the bike's lack of peak horsepower; high-speed runs down canyon roads just aren't in the KLR's travel plans. In the dirt, however, the power output is more than adequate. That's because the KLR's motor is extraordinarily easy to use. In fact, the machine's wide, even powerband is a natural for anything from fireroading to woods work. At first, the tendency is to overrev the 600 as you search for top-end power that simply isn't there. But soon you realize that the other end of the powerband is the place to be. You can actually leave the machine in one gear all day, and downshift for nothing but the tightest turn. The KLR's powerband is even wide enough to make up for gear ratios that are spaced relatively far apart.



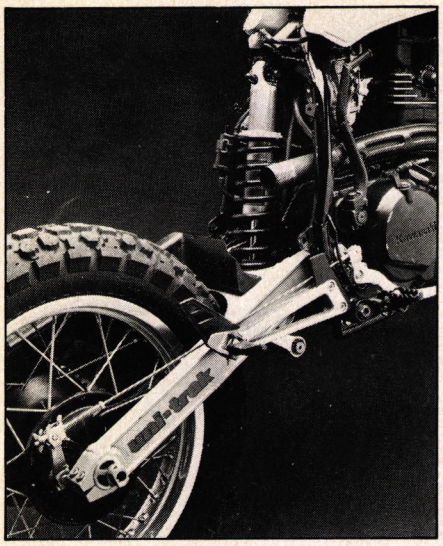
The Kawasaki KLR600 has the most complex, most techno-intensive dual-purpose motor

But unfortunately, not the most powerful.

Those widely spaced ratios rank among surprisingly few street-oriented traits that limit the KLR on dirt roads. Even the Dunlop K550 and K750 tires are amazingly competent on anything from pavement to adobe. Strangely enough, what does limit the KLR's fireroad potential is a factor from the *dirt* side of its personality. Like most motocross and enduro bikes, the Kawasaki is tall—so tall, in fact, that the bike is difficult to slide in loose turns. Both wheels tend to break loose at the same time unless the rider's weight is extremely far forward, but the bulky fuel tank makes that kind of body positioning difficult.

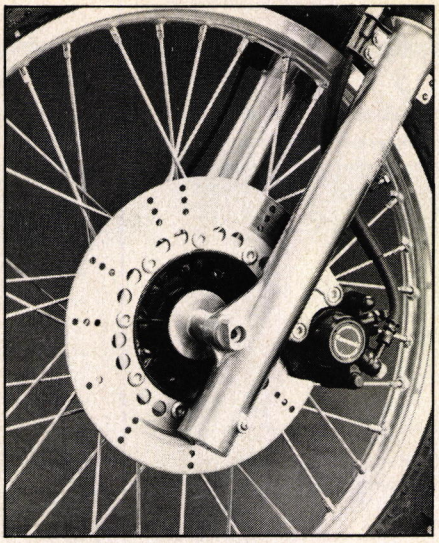
The reason for the KLR's height lies in its motocross-style long-travel suspension. Actually, the KLR's Uni-Trak configuration has more in common with that of the GPz line than with any Kawasaki dirtbike. Rather than having the linkage above the shock as with the KXs and KDXs, the linkage is under the swingarm, making for a lower center of gravity and a more compact system. The nonadjustable Kayaba shock produces 9.3 inches of rear wheel travel—and a seat height that goes with that much travel. That not only makes the machine difficult to slide off-road, but awkward on the street. Under hard braking, the fork dives and the rear suspension unloads, making you feel like you're sitting on a yard-tall Slinky.

Of course, the primary reason for all that suspension travel is to make the ma-



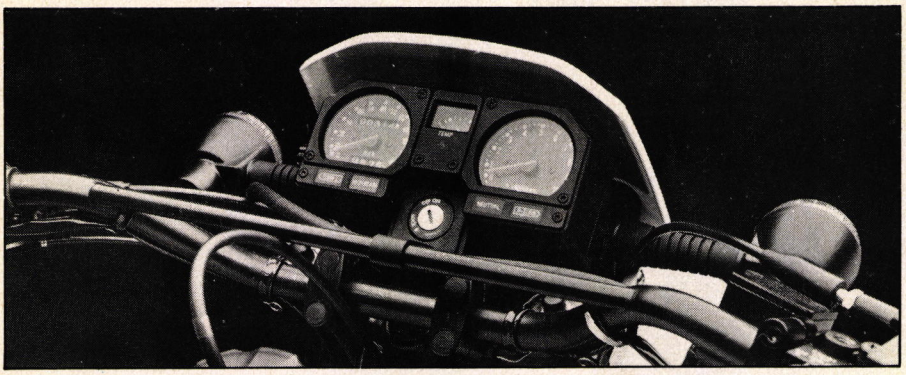
Dual-purpose Uni-Trak suspension

Street configuration, dirt travel.



Kawasaki's hydraulic front disc brake

Inherited from both street and dirt.



The Kawasaki cockpit has almost every control or instrument you could ask for

Except the one you need most: a handlebar-mounted compression release lever.

chine handle in rough terrain. And in fact, the 600 does surprisingly well when the pavement ends and the ground turns choppy. Drop-offs and sharp impacts are absorbed easily, and when either end bottoms, it does so without harshness. But a series of big whoops is cause to turn around and head back for the road. The KLR is just too heavy to control if it gets out of hand. That's the price for all the bike's complication and technology. For casual off-roading, the suspension does a remarkably good job, but anything approaching a motocross-level obstacle is out of the KLR's league.

Actually, though, any kind of serious single-purpose riding is out of the KLR's league. The bike is too tall for the street and too heavy for trails. But then, the machine isn't meant for either one of these functions, rather for *both* of them. The bike simply faces the classic dual-purpose dilemma of how to do everything without being poor at everything. And so the real question is whether Kawasaki's massive infusion of technology is the best way to approach that dilemma. Consider that despite the complication of a liquid-cooled, DOHC four-valve engine, the KLR produces only mediocre horsepower. And despite having the absolute latest in single-shock suspension, the machine still is limited to smooth trails by its weight. Even the automatic compression release isn't effective in making an easy-to-start thumper.

This doesn't mean that there's no hope for the revival of on/off road motorcycles. In fact, the ultimate answer probably still lies in some manner of technology. But one thing is clear: The Kawasaki's technology *isn't* the answer. It's part of the problem. ●

Nits:

- Right passenger footpeg interferes with kickstarter rotation.
- Kickstand bends outward.
- Exhaust discolors rear fender.

Picks:

- Frame-mounted grab bars convenient for lifting bike.
- Tool bag convenient for carrying small items.

Ride Reviews

• Kawasaki has gone too far this time. First we got the Voyager, the largest, most feature-intensive turn-key tourer ever foisted onto the motorcycling public. Now Kawasaki is trying to set the same size/complexity records in the dual-purpose class. Prima facie evidence for this is the KLR600. Although its four-valve, twin-cam, liquid-cooled engine puts the KLR technologically well ahead of it competitors, there is really little real-world benefit. In fact, the sheer heft of all that hardware neatly negates any potential performance increase. The KLR is an adequate short-trip streetbike, though, as long as you have the starting ritual well polished. Even then, the Kawasaki is not particularly confortable, and not as nimble as an XL Honda. At least the Voyager has a radio. *—Marc Cook*

• If I weren't concerned with the evolution of dual-purpose machinery, I never would have spent some 280 hours fabricating my own C&J/Mugen 500. Obviously, I like dual-purpose bikes. And that's why the KLR600 is such a disappointment for me.

On one hand, Kawasaki has taken dual-purpose motorcycling to new technological heights, with its liquid-cooled engine, aluminum rear subframe and extruded swingarm. But in the areas that really matter—areas like handling, power delivery, acceleration and even braking—Kawasaki clearly fell short of unseating the undisputed performance leader in the class, Honda's XL600R. The KLR is a fine example of a company taking great strides and only achieving mediocrity. And while that might be good enough for Kawasaki, it's not good enough for me. *—George Wegner*

• If you've read this far, you know the KLR isn't a full-dress tourer, a $6000 one-off, a motocrosser or a sportbike. Big deal. The fact that on/off-road motorcycles can't be neatly pigeonholed is the cross they bear. Now, I'm not proposing the KLR for dual-purpose sainthood, but consider what the 600 *can* do: It's light, comfortably suspended, can blow by any four-wheeler in traffic, has the smoothest big-thumper motor ever built, and when the mood strikes, it can make a more-than-token appearance in the dirt. So what if it's not the amazing all-purpose motorcycle? As far as I can tell, every attempt to build a do-all bike has involved some compromise. I'll admit that the KLR isn't the compromise *I'd* choose, but mostly I see it as a reasonable performer hamstrung by unreasonable comparisons.

—Larry Works

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Kawasaki KLR600 — dual-purpose

IMPORTER: Kawasaki Motors Corp., 2009 East Edinger Ave., Santa Ana, California 92711

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2449

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke vertical single
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 96.0mm x 78.0mm
Displacement 564.7cc
Compression ratio 9.5:1
Engine redline . . . . . 8000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . one 40mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . washable oiled foam element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . primary kick
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 147-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 10-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 2.429:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . #520 O-ring chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 2.867:1 (43/15) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.438	16.978	4.57
II	1.529	10.648	7.28
III	1.182	8.231	9.42
IV	0.955	6.651	11.66
V	0.792	5.515	14.06

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Kayaba air-spring, 38mm stanchion tube diameter, /9.2 in. (234mm)
Rear . . . . . single Kayaba shock, /9.5 in. (242mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . single-action hydraulic caliper, 9.8-in. (248mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . drum, single-leading shoe, straight-pull cable operated

TIRES

Front . . . . . 3.00-21 Dunlop K750A TT
Rear . . . . . 5.10-17 Dunlop K550TT

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

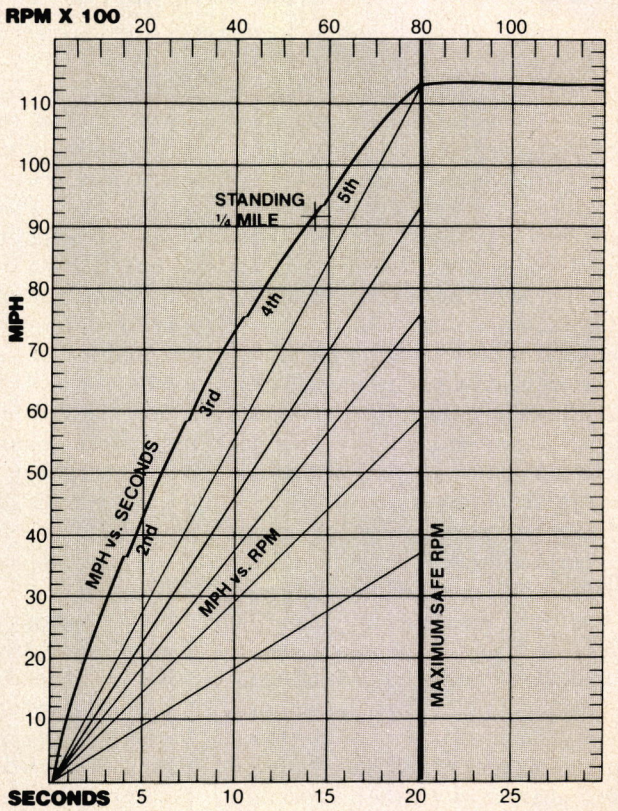
Weight . . . . . 322 lbs. (146.1kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 44.1% front, 55.9% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 660 lbs. (299kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 318 lbs. (144kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 58.5 to 59.6 in. (1485 to 1513mm)
Seat height . . . . . 35.7 in. (908mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 33.3 in. (845mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 15.2 in. (387mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 11.1 in. (282mm), at engine cradle
Steering head angle . . . . . 29.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.8 in. (122mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular mild steel and box-section aluminum, single front downtube
Oil capacity . . . . . 2.1 qt. (2.0/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 3.2 gal. (12.3/), including 0.5 gal.(1.9/) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, coolant temperature gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 43 to 53 mpg (18 to 23 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 48 mpg (20 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 138 to 170 miles (222 to 274km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . 22 to 27 miles (35 to 43km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 27 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 50 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 14.109 sec., 91.46 mph (147 km/h)
Top speed (calculated at redline) . . . . . 112 mph (180 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 34 ft. (10.4m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 124 ft. (37.8m)

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: Polar White only



All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

PHOTOGRAPHY© 1984 TOM RILES

Blackwater 100

America's Toughest Race.

• Let's talk tough. You can forget the Daytona 200, the Nelson Ledges 24 Hours or even the Carlsbad USGP of Motocross. We're talking *tough*. We're talking the Blackwater 100, a cross-country race that's been labeled by both its promoters and participants as "America's Toughest Race."

If you think that's an exaggeration, consider this: Of 403 starters for this year's race, only 33 completed the 100 miles (four laps). And because there was little rainfall the week before the race, 1984's running of the event was considered an *easy* 100-miler, at least by typical Blackwater standards.

Some people can't believe that an obscure cross-country race that takes place in the hills of West Virginia could be the toughest race in America. But each June, by the end of the race, riders talk about the Blackwater with awe. It's a contest that only the lucky experience—and only the strongest survive.

It's also a race that can push riders to the limits of despair and exhaustion. Race promoter Dave Coombs said that one year a rider got his bike stuck in a section known as The Bogs, a mile-long stretch of mud, water and soft grass. "He just walked out of there," said Coombs, "and left his bike." The rider never told the race officials about his abandoned bike; he just packed his van and went home, leaving his bike to rot in the backwoods of West Virginia. As Coombs told the story, the bike was found two months later by some trailriders, who stumbled across it while exploring the

Continued

Dick Burleson finally challenged Blackwater

He lost the race—and his rider's bib.

The best way to conquer The Bogs is to keep the power on.

America's Toughest Race is sometimes won or lost in the mile-long bogs.

Blackwater countryside just to see what the race was all about.

The Blackwater was first run in 1975. Coombs got the idea after seeing the Elsinore Grand Prix in the movie "On Any Sunday." Coombs figured there was room for a similar 100-mile cross-country race on the East Coast. He presented the civic leaders of Davis, West Virginia, with the idea of running an Elsinore-type race, and shortly after, America's Toughest Race was born. The race is not a moneymaking affair for the promoters. Coombs claims that most of the Blackwater proceeds go to the various charity and civic programs in Davis. The local chamber of commerce supports the annual event because of the tourist business.

But the racers aren't much concerned with the fine points of the race's financing, because for most of them, the main concern is just to finish, no mean feat in itself. The race starts along the main street of Davis, spills into the Beaver Creek crossing, then heads up a trail to Blackwater River. At that point, the race turns into a survival course. The herd heads up and down a 3000-foot hill, then up Cabin Mountain for the first checkpoint at the 9.3-mile mark. And it's shortly after the first checkpoint that they encounter The Bogs, a name familiar to any Blackwater veteran. Riders who survive The Bogs—and there aren't many—proceed to checkpoint No. 2, then past a strip mine, across Beaver Creek one more time near Highway 93, and finally back into town for checkpoint No. 3 and the beginning of another lap.

Lojak's Country

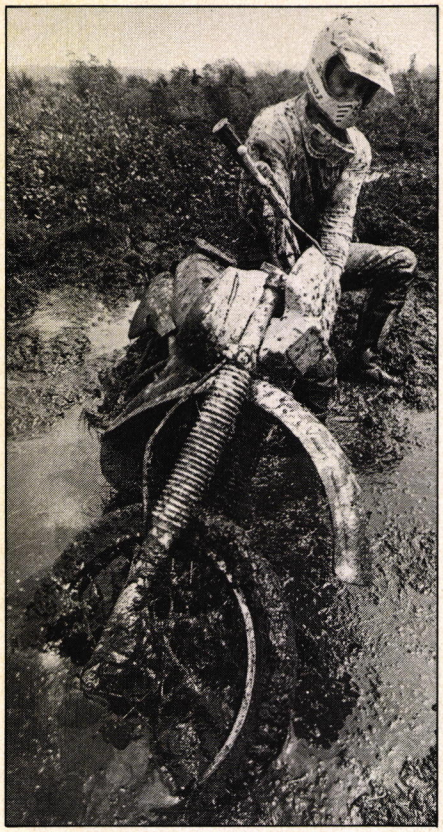
• The Lojak name is legendary in the inner circles of cross-country and enduro racing. Joe, Stan and Ron Lojak are enduro riders from a family that, by all indications, has mud in its blood. The most recent Lojak to surface from the bogs of Pennsylvania is Ed Lojak, the 1983 AMA Hare Scrambles Champion, and the man who won The Blackwater 100 last June.

It was only a question of time before a Lojak won this race, and for the past seven years, most Blackwater fans have placed their bets on Ed. After all, he won the 250cc class in 1978 (his first Blackwater), and has led the race in subsequent years, only to DNF from mechanical problems every time. Some people wondered, though, whether the race was a jinx for Ed, and thought Lojak Country possibly stopped at the West Virginia border.

The doubting ended this year, however, when race leader Sammy Bosnic dropped three minutes behind because of fuel problems, and Ed put his Husqvarna 250CR in the lead for good during the penultimate lap. After his Blackwater win, Lojak coolly stated that this year's race wasn't as difficult as those in the past. "It could have been tougher if we had rain," he said. "In fact," he added, "this is the first time we've ever had a dust problem."

And so, after seven tries, Lojak ended his dry spell at The Blackwater 100. But even if he doesn't consider this year's 100 America's toughest race, one thing is for sure: The Blackwater was perhaps the toughest race for him to *win*.

—Dain Gingerelli



Stuck is another word for Blackwater

When one man-power beats 32 hp.

And it's there that the moment of truth stares every rider in the face: He has the option of pulling into his pit for gas—or for good. It's a temptation that practically each rider considers. For instance, one KDX250 rider came in for gas during this year's race, and while his pit crew filled the gas tank, he found a lawn chair to rest in. After guzzling some water and wiping the mud from his face, he muttered something about not making it around the 23-mile course one more time. His friend, standing nearby, took a swig from a beer, and said to no one in particular, "Oh, he'll make another lap. We'll be here in the pits, cheering him on." As it developed, the KDX rider finished another lap, and his friend in the pits finished another beer...or two.

But the Blackwater can be conquered. The rider with the most wins is Kevin LaVoie, who won the first Blackwater, then came back to win it again in '76 and '78. This year's winner was 1983 AMA Hare Scrambles Champion Ed Lojak. Lojak rode a Husqvarna 250CR to the overall win, his first after seven tries at the Blackwater. Lojak, who has led the Blackwater every year he's entered, took a different tack for 1984: "This year I stuck to my plan, and rode consistently every lap. It paid off." But for 370 other riders, the 1984 Blackwater remained a source of frustration; a race they not only didn't win but didn't even finish. And with those odds, the Blackwater 100 warrants both respect and its reputation as "America's Toughest Race."

—Dain Gingerelli

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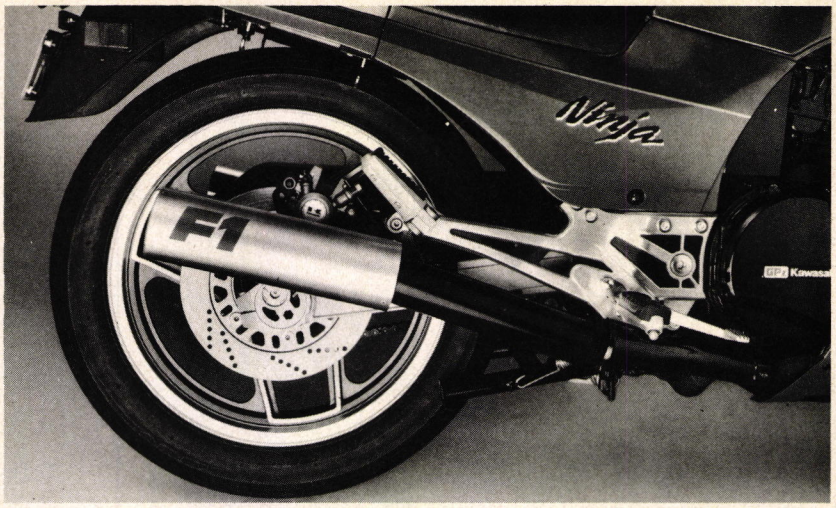

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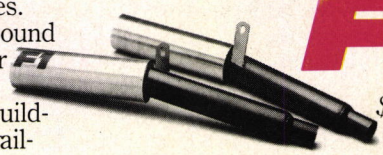

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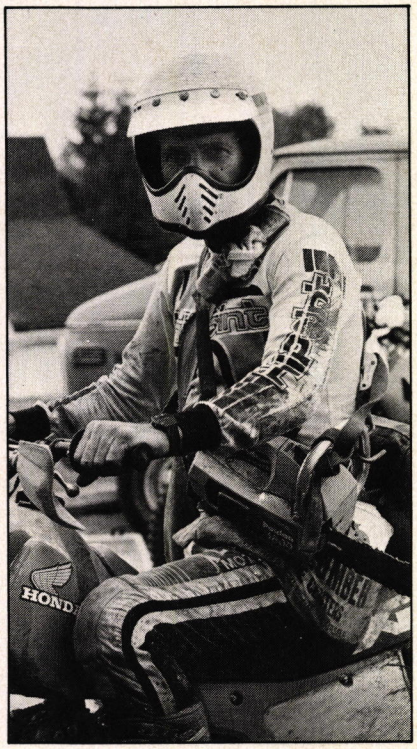
America's Toughest Promoter

• What does it take to make the Blackwater 100 America's Toughest Race? America's toughest promoter, that's what. That man is David Coombs.

Coombs is not an average promoter for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that, along with the Blackwater, he's responsible for 81 other races in the Pennsylvania/West Virginia area during the year. Most of his events are dirt-related, including motocross, enduro, cross-country and Supercross.

But Coombs is proudest of his work with the Blackwater, a race he helped initiate in 1975. The Blackwater traditionally runs in mid-June, but Coombs' preparation begins about Easter, when he lays out a route that's slightly different from the previous year's course. Once he's selected a 25-mile loop, the real work begins: He hauls a chain saw onto the course, and spends time clearing fallen trees, relocating rocks and removing other obstacles from the planned path. Before the race is run, Coombs and his trailbike accumulate about a dozen or so laps on the Blackwater course.



That's only the beginning. On the morning of the race, he's out on the course one more time, pinning up trail-marker ribbons, and making final checks for any additional hazards he might have missed. Then he returns to prep *his* bike for the race. Coombs, who is 43 years old, enters the Senior Class, and races the 100 miles with everyone else. He won his class this year, but only after cracking an engine case (his pit crew sealed it with duct tape) and running his Yamaha IT250's cooling system dry. Even America's Toughest Promoter encounters trouble on the Blackwater.

But the checkered flag doesn't mark the end of the race for Coombs. He still has to sweep the course for riders stranded in "the jungles of the Blackwater," as announcer Tim Cotter puts it. As it turned out this year, Coombs spent most of Sunday evening and Monday morning sweeping the course: "We got the last bike out Monday afternoon," he said.

But none of that ever bothers him. In fact, Coombs seems to thrive on hitting the Blackwater trail as often as he can. Because the best place for America's toughest promoter appears to be at—or in—America's Toughest Race.

—Dain Gingerelli

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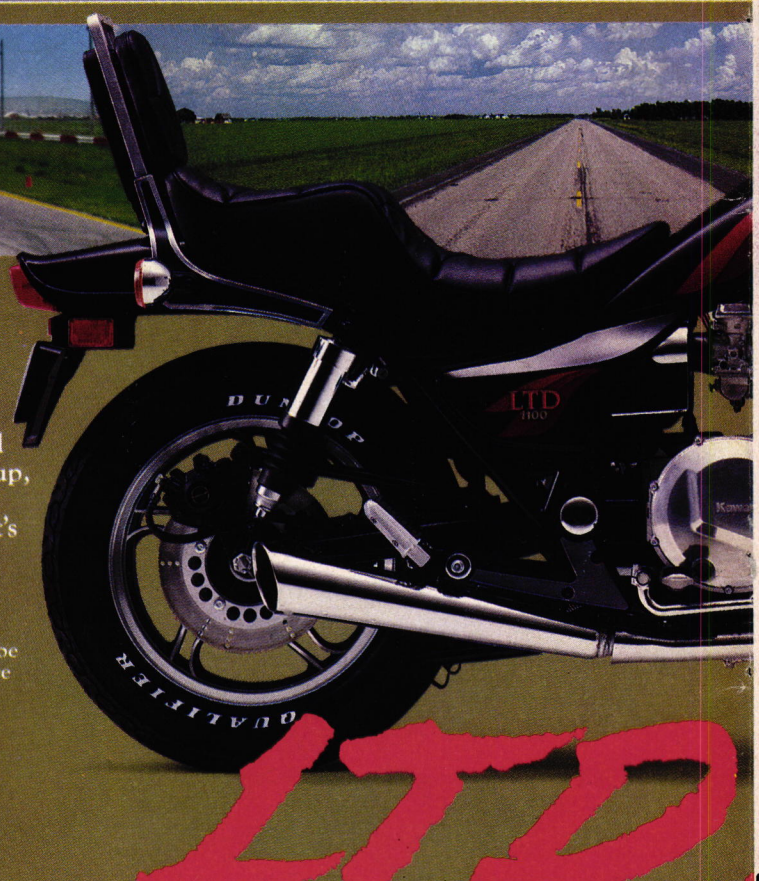
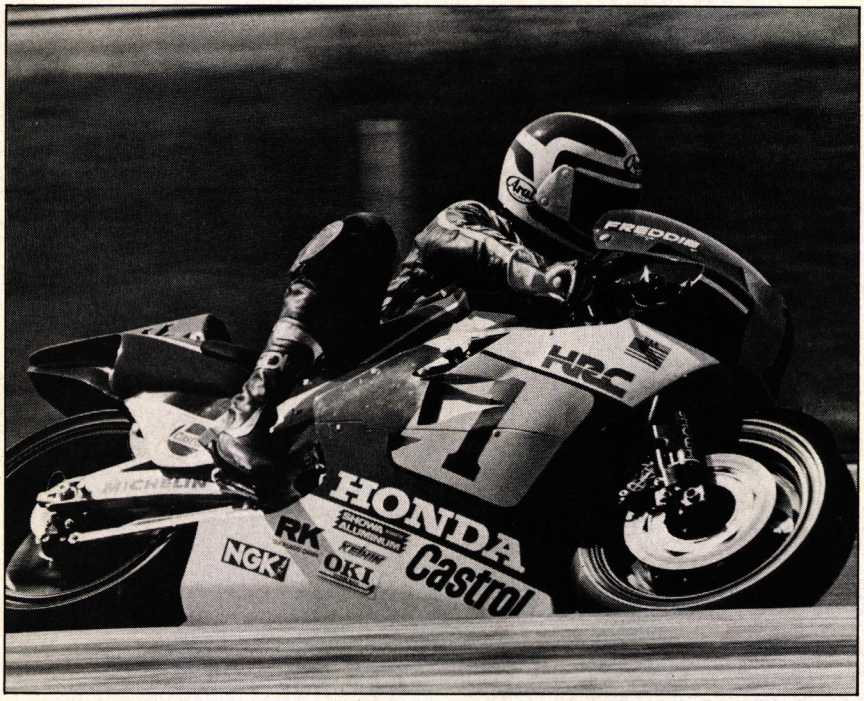


LTD

Pit Bits



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World Champion Freddie Spencer has two works Hondas at his disposal

He rode the NS500 to German win; the NSR (shown here) to first in France.

• Three for one: World Champion Freddie Spencer took a step backward at the German GP. He parked his new NSR500, favoring last year's three-banger for the race. The choice was right; he won his third GP this year.

• Three will get you four: Honda has given Randy Mamola an NSR500 for the remainder of the Grand Prix season. Mamola took delivery of the vee-four at the French GP, but didn't have adequate practice time on it for the race. He rode his NS500 vee-three to third, behind race-winner Freddie Spencer and Yamaha's Eddie Lawson. But things came together for Mamola and his vee-four at the Assen TT, when he took the NSR500 to first after Spencer DNFed.

• Everyone loves a winner: When front-line motocross racers, such as Rick Johnson and David Bailey, win a National or Supercross race, it's not uncommon for them to share their excitement by tossing some of their riding gear to the crowd. Gloves, goggles and jerseys become souvenirs for lucky spectators. At a recent Supercross, a backmarker celebrated not being lapped by the win-

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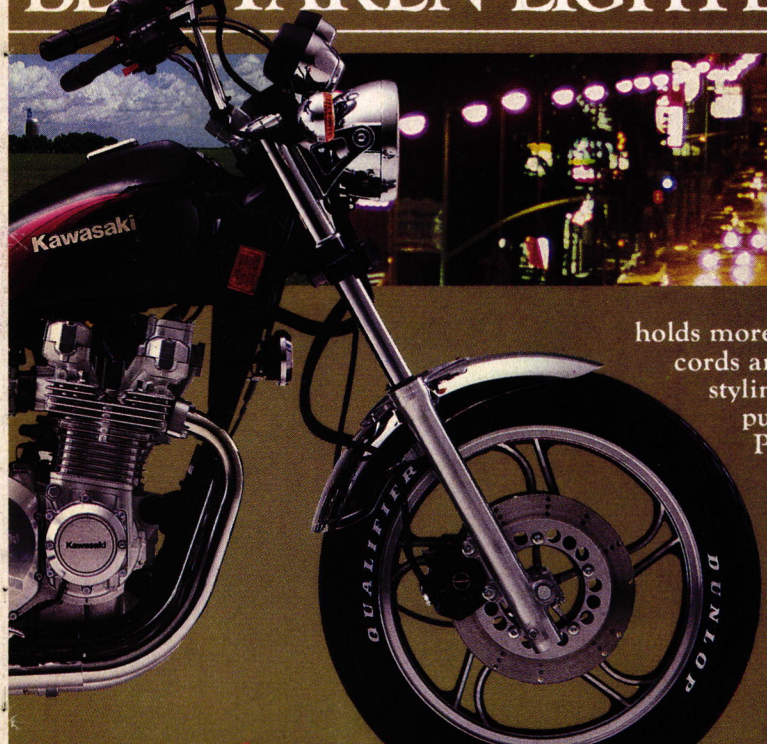
BE TAKEN LIGHTLY.



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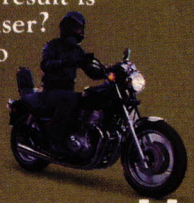

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1100

Pit Bits

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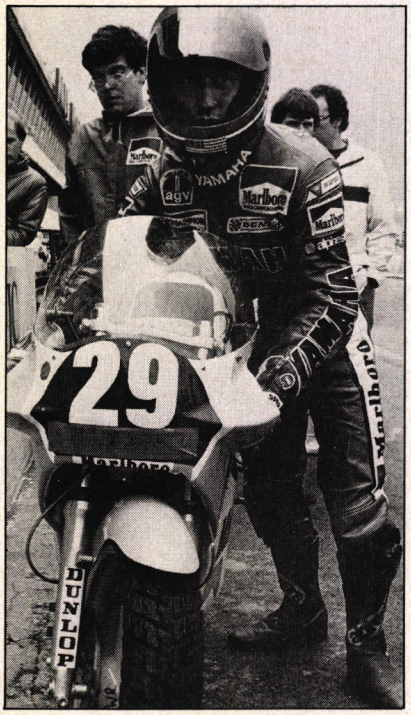
Randy Mamola took delivery of an NSR500, but favored the older vee-three for French GP

As a privateer, he stuck with what works, and finished a respectible third.

ner, and tossed his goggles into the bleachers after the race. The rider's father later returned to the pits and casually said, "You can go get your goggles. They're where you left them. Nobody picked them up." Apparently, also-ran apparel isn't at a premium with memorabilia collectors.



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Kenny Roberts tests Rainey's TZ250L

Looking for the racer's edge.

• Roberts the troubleshooter: During the French Grand Prix, Team Marlboro 250 team manager, Kenny Roberts, spent some time helping riders Wayne Rainey and Alan Carter sort out their Yamaha TZ250Ls. Roberts fiddled with the bikes, then hopped on for some test laps around the Paul Ricard circuit. It's open to debate whether Roberts' efforts were in vain: Rainey finished fifth, while Carter crashed, unhurt, after his TZ's engine seized.

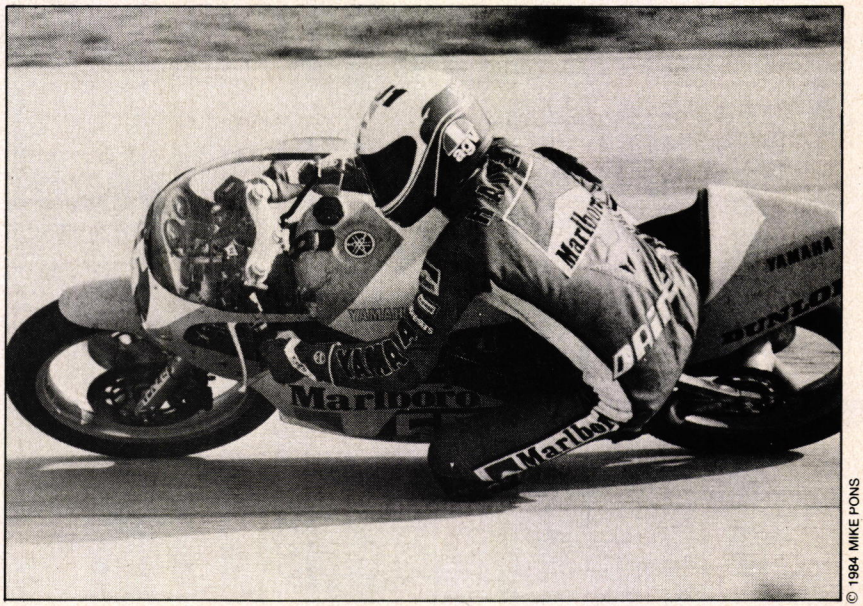
• Yamaha Superbike: Although no one at Yamaha likes to talk about roadracing these days, the rumor is that the company will have an RZ500 Superbike ready for 1985. Adding support to the story was the RZ500 delivered to race director Ken Clark last June. The official word is that the bike belongs to Clark. Speculation within the race community is otherwise.

• Canada can: Meanwhile, the Canadians know exactly where they are headed with their half-liter RZs—right to the racetrack. The word is that Yamaha Canada has a proposed budget for at least two-years' worth of roadracing with the RZ500. And it's no secret Yamaha's got its sights on Honda VF750F Interceptors.

• Yamahappy: Americans Broc Glover and Rick Johnson finished first and second at the Nissan USGP at Carlsbad. The Yamaha teammates placed their Open-class YZs 4-1 and 3-2, respectively, to beat Honda's Johnny O'Mara, who finished third overall. Points-leader Andre Malherbe finished fourth.

• Malherbe-happy: While Andre Malherbe didn't win the overall, he was the highest-placed European in the race. None of the racers who finished ahead of him at Carlsbad is contesting the 500 GP series, so in terms of the overall point standings, Malherbe won. He left California—as he came—with the 500cc Grand Prix points lead.

• Overseas 'liners: It appears that the race for the motorcycle land-speed



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Wayne Rainey has benefitted from the services of team manager Kenny Roberts

But he still hasn't won a world championship Grand Prix.

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Malherbe left Carlsbad in first place

No. 2—and trying harder.

record has developed into an international affair. Rumors persist that an Australian team has a twin-engine Triumph streamliner ready for an assault on Don Vesco's 318-mph record. Englishman Alan MacFadzean, meanwhile, has shoehorned a Suzuki RG500 square-four into a cigar-shape liner, similar in size to Vesco's LSR-record-holding bike.

• Man the Harley-Davidson: But the streamliner sponsored by Bub Enterprises is no rumor. It's ready to race, says project manager Dennis Manning. Manning, who has been working on LSR 'liners for nearly two decades, said the single-engine Bub/Harley bike is ready for the top-end run. "We've already tested it this year," said Manning, "and Dan (Kinsey) ran 225 miles per hour with it." Manning went on to say that the run was made—start to finish—in less than 2.5 miles. "We were geared for 255mph, "he said, "so Dan had to keep it in third gear, and rev to 9000 rpm." Next stop: 318-plus mph, or so they tell us.

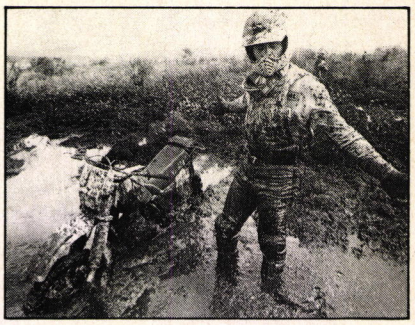
• Quote Department: While Dennis Manning has become somewhat of an authority on LSR streamliners, he's also become known for his one-liners. Recently, when describing the gasoline used for a test run in the Bub Enterprises streamliner, he said, "The pump gas we have is so bad, it pings when you wash parts with it." —*Dain Gingerelli*

Winners & Losers

The Blackwater Bogs

A few parting shots of The Blackwater 100.

No one leaves the Blackwater Bogs without certain memories: Sammy Bosnic did a Flying W, and saved it to finish third. But for every rider who makes it through, there are dozens of others who don't. Helping the stubborn pilgrims who soldier on are spectators willing to dive into the mud to lend a hand, although in some cases, the bike already might be history. Still, other riders just ask, "Why me?"



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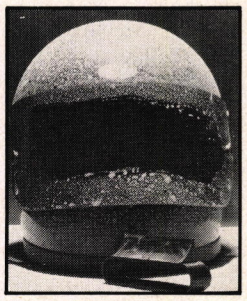

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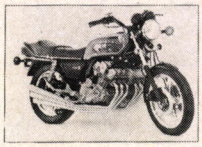

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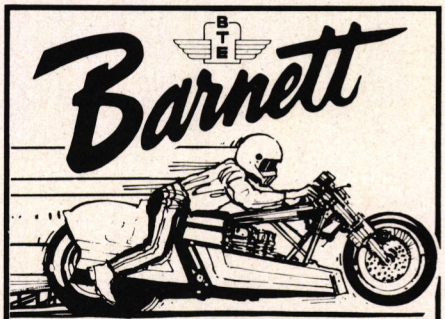

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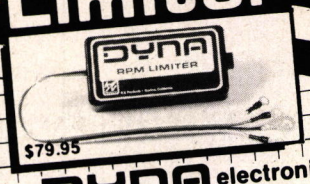

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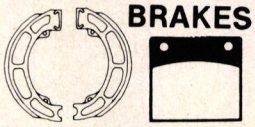

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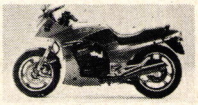

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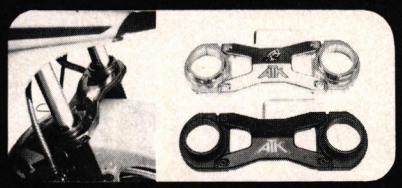

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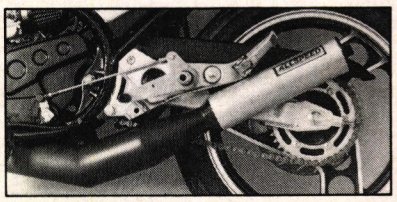

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LETTERS *Questions answered, Problems solved, Wishes granted.*

DISCREPANCY?

Please take a look at the quarter-mile times for the FJ1100, on pages 26 and 52 in your June 1984 issue. Why does the same bike in the same issue with the same everything else have two different E.T.s? I realize that you can't be perfect, but don't you think this is going to extremes? Please explain; this is a real mind-bender.

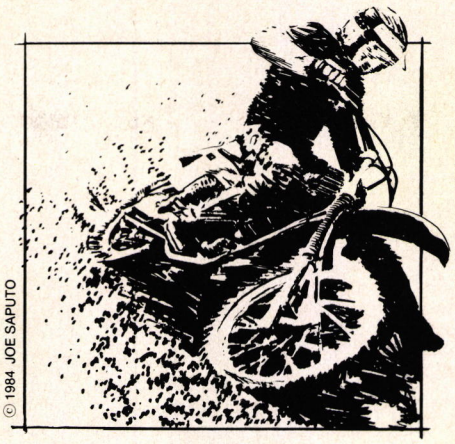
David Brochstein
Montgomery, Texas

Everything wasn't the same: The E.T. for "The Fastest" was generated by John Gleason; the time for the road test, like all of our specs page E.T.s, was cut by staffer Charles Everitt—ed.

BIM VIEW

I found the road test of the BMW R100RS in your March issue quite interesting. I own an RS, and I do not think your test did the bike justice. I have encountered few of the problems this test points out. The sensitivity to crosswinds, lack of rock-solid feel and high-effort steering do not exist on my bike. I will gladly give up some of the road-rocket speed for the simplicity and durability of this Boxer twin. I feel small details like excellent brakes, ease of maintenance, three-year warranty, the quality of finish, a low center of gravity and the bike's light weight are more important than the "shaft-induced jacking." The eight years it took the motorcycle industry to catch up with the R100RS is what made this bike a distinguished motorcycle. With the new K-series on the way, what new standards will be set for the others to start chasing?

Greg Noe
Graham, Texas



MIDDLEWEIGHT GRUMBLING

I am very disappointed in the "Middleweight Shootout" in your July issue. Why did you test the Yamaha RZ350 two-stroke against the four-strokes? The Honda Nighthawk S would have been more in line with the rest of the competitors. I can't understand why you tested such a small bike, when you already had a Yamaha. There is a 252cc difference between the RZ and the FJ600, but less than 100cc between the FJ and the Nighthawk S.

Bedford W. Sipes
Lovington, N.M.

We set the cutoff at 600cc, the limit imposed by most racing organizations for middleweights—ed.

SPEEDO WARS

I have a question about the top speeds of the bikes you tested in your June issue. You claim that the top speed for the FJ1100 is 145 mph, and the top speed for the VF1000F is 146. The indicated top speed on my FJ1100 is 260kph, or 162 mph. My question is this: My brother owns a 1000F Interceptor, and his best top speed is 240kph, or 151 mph. I realize these are not accurate speeds,

Continued

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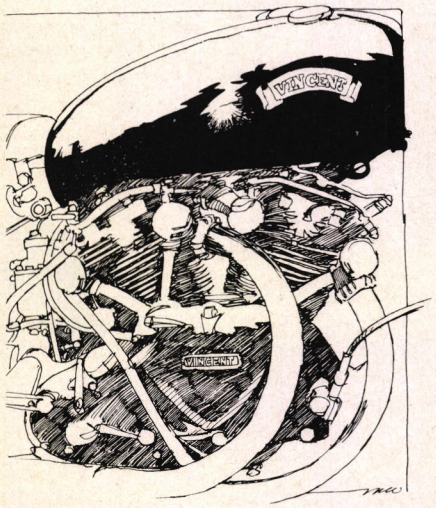
LETTERS

but why is it that I pass him everytime we run top end? Is there a difference between the Canadian FJ and the one sold in the States?

Terry Dodds
Perth, Ontario
Canada

Canadian and European FJs are geared higher (lower numerically) than those sold in the U.S., the land where the quarter-mile is king—ed.



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MISSED DIAGNOSIS

Spring cleaning time again: Guess what goes into the round file? Why, all that's useless, of course. Your rag tops that list, so I have unplugged the respirator on my subscription. Over the past year, I have watched your tests become less objective, editorial comments (to letters) become more bitter and rigor set upon your prose. The "Big Rig" issue sent the sub into a coma, but I decided to postpone my prognosis until June's offering. The blurred cover was an omen, and Thompson confirmed his senility by repeating that repulsive, hyphenated cliche related to touring. Looking for signs of life, I turned to Letters, where Ed's responses proved your condition highly critical, if not terminal.

I stifled a blood-curdling scream, then performed the mercy killing. Since you are next-of-kin, should I bury the corpse, or leave it for your Japanese beetles? Now, if I could only stop those nightmares—the hyphens turn into maggots the size of Harley shocks, attach to my spine, and suck the humor and imagination from my system. Horrible stuff indeed.

Tim Tolleson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Tolleson, listen carefully: Stop whatever you're doing, pick up the telephone and seek professional help. When you get out, let us know how you're doing. We care—ed.

SECOND OPINION

I've been an avid subscriber for years, but find myself compelled to thank you for the job you've been doing in 1984. Your head-to-head comparisons have been the best ever. The March "Big Rigs," May "Family Feud," June "Fastest" and July "Middleweight Shootout" articles have been the best in terms of providing usable consumer information.

I also appreciate the "Nits and Picks" addition as a concise method of identifying a bike's features that would drive me absolutely crazy. I don't care how good a motorcycle might be—if I have to remove the cams to set the valves, I won't buy the bike. Are you listening, Kawasaki?

Jim Dougherty
S. Lake Tahoe, California

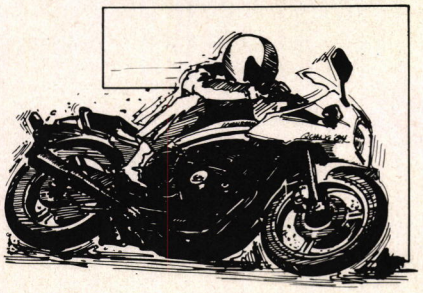
Are you listening, Tolleson?—ed.

HARD HEADS

The letter from Sam O'Donnell (July 1984) really should be the last word in the helmet-law debate, but since it won't be, I'll add my piece. I don't know about the rightness or wrongness of helmet laws. I do know that the reason some people feel we should have such laws is that other people don't wear helmets. That, I find a more puzzling and serious question.

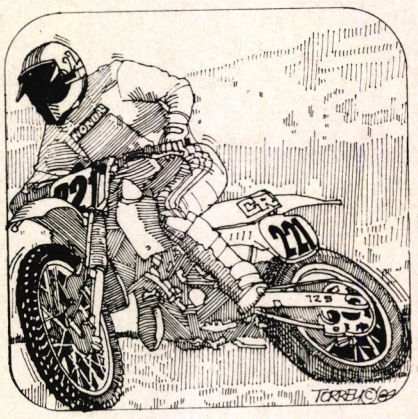
I am a neurosurgeon and a motorcyclist, and that qualifies me to make two statements. The first is that brain injuries are honestly bad for you. They can ruin your life and go on ruining it long after you have lost the power to appreciate that fact.

The second statement concerns the types of risk we choose to incur voluntarily. We accept the risks of riding because of the associated rewards, and because we control those risks to some degree. At whatever speed—and therefore risk—the helmet is pretty much irrelevant as long as the bike is down and you are up. But when you slide one way and the old GPz another, you are in a situation where the outcome is beyond any control you can exert. At that time, only two things keep you from meeting someone like me. One is dumb luck; the other is your hard hat.



In the first case, we accept the risks of a crash because they are inseparable from motorcycling. In the second case, we only magnify the risks of a crash, and get nothing in exchange.

I understand why some persons might not want to be subject to governmental edicts concerning helmets. The same logic might, after all, be used to ban motorcycles. But to say that given the opportunity to bounce your head on pavement at high speed, you'd rather do it bareheaded—that makes no sense. Can anyone out there explain?



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Joel N. Abramovitz, M.D.
Boston, Massachusetts

No one here—ed.

CIVIL SERVICE

The letter from Christopher Kobel (May 1984) about unsafe road-construction practices—and your comment about bureaucratic stupidity in every city—forces me to protest.

As the engineer in charge of street renewal works on major arterial roadways in a Canadian city with a population of 600,000, I insure that all projects are two-wheel safe. To insure that each construction project is two-wheel safe, it is test driven by a motorcyclist—me.

G.A. Knoll
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada

It would be nice to think that went on in every city—ed.

FOUR WISHES

I don't often find myself in the position of being able to grant wishes, but I think I can help at least four of the eight

LETTERS

wishers from the "Wishbook" column in your May issue.

Let's see: One writer decries overweight bikes of moderate displacement packed with high-tech wizardry; another wants a relatively unspecialized ride that isn't either all profile or all roadburner; one wants something that he can easily adapt to his own physiology and individual taste. The fourth wisher's fondest desire is a bike that won't become so dated in one year that the dealer no longer stocks parts for it.

Well now, gentlemen, hold still now while I dust off my magic wand and pronounce the magic word: "Triumph." There, that didn't hurt a bit, did it?

John T. Knell
Ada, Ohio

LEFT OUT?

Your magazine tests all the kinds of bikes except one: dual-purpose bikes. Every month I read your magazine, waiting for a test like this. What about it?

Nicky B. Kazattranassis
New Orleans, Louisiana

See page 62—ed.

PATIENCE, PATIENCE

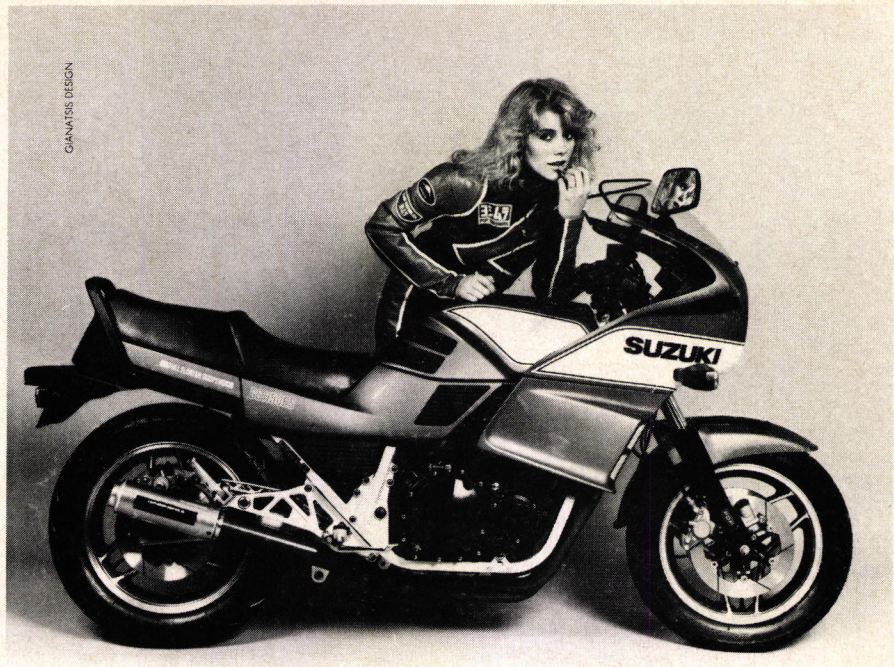
It has been almost one year since I subscribed to your magazine, and I find myself wondering why I did. To start with, I am a dedicated Moto Guzzi owner, and in the past 12 months your magazine hasn't seen fit to print anything but a few lines about these dependable, durable, safe and reasonably priced makes. Not one feature article or test. In the same time you have pushed Hondas like you own stock in the company. Why can't a superior machine like the Guzzi get a fair shake? Sorry, but there will be no renewal of my subscription until I see that you are not simply a Honda PR rag.

Marc T. Broussard
Washburn, North Dakota

See page 44—ed. ●

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret we are unable to give personal responses.

Questions or comments? You can talk with the CYCLE GUIDE staff by calling (213) 328-5700. Phones will be answered Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.—5 p.m., Pacific Standard Time.



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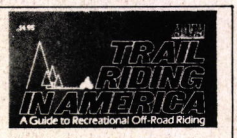

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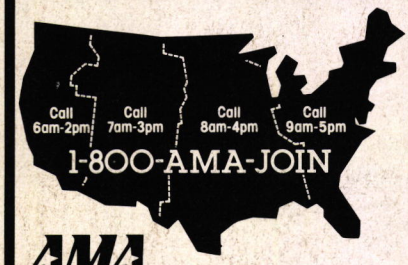

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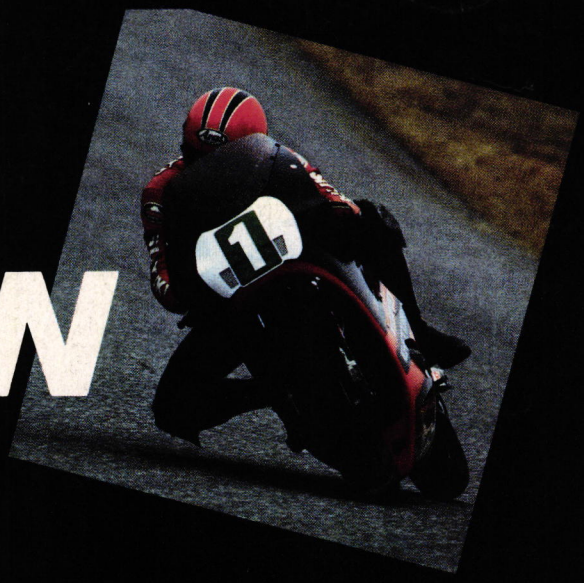

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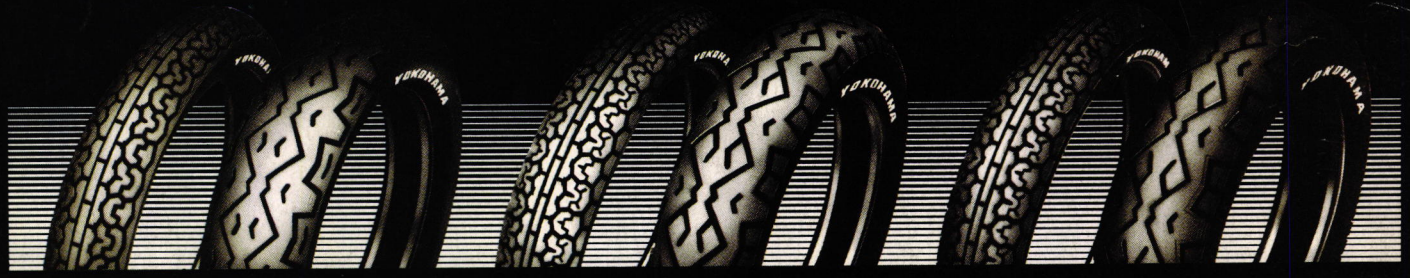

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